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Life of Sir Walter Scott

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Sir Walter Scott.

A Centennial Offering.

SIR WALTER SCOTT, BART.

A Centennial Offering.

1771—1871.

LIFE

—OF—

Sir Walter Scott;

WITH REMARKS UPON HIS WRITINGS,

BY

FRANCIS TURNER PALGRAVE.

WITH AN ESSAY ON SCOTT,

BY DAVID MASSON, M.A.

AND

DRYBURGH ABBEY: A POEM.

BY CHARLES SWAIN.

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SIR WALTER SCOTT.

WITHIN that small number of our countrymen who have been known and admired throughout the civilized world during this century, three hold a place of unrivalled pre-eminence,—Wellington, Scott, and Byron. Each of the three kingdoms claims one of these heroes; but although Ireland and England may also point to something distinguishably national in the genius of their sons, yet it will not be disputed that Scotland is far more exclusively and fully represented by Marmion and the Heart of Midlothian, than the spirit of England by Childe Harold, or that of Ireland by the Peninsular campaigns. We read in the early ages of the world how whole nations sprang from, and were known by the name of some one great chief, to whom a more than human rank was assigned by the poetry and the gratitude of later generations. Doris and Ionia were personified in Ion and Dorus. It appears not altogether fanciful to think similarly of Scott: in the phrase employed by the historians of Greece, he might be styled the *eponymous hero* of Scotland. He sums up, or seems to sum up, in the most conspicuous manner, those leading qualities in which his countrymen, at least his countrymen of old, differ from their fellow Britons. No one human being can, however, be completely the representative man of his race, and some points may be observed in Scott which do not altogether reflect the national image. Yet, on the whole, Mr. Carlyle's estimate will probably be accepted as the truth: "No Scotchman of his time was more entirely Scotch than Walter Scott; the good

and the not so good, which all Scotchmen inherit, ran through every fibre of him."

The first and best reason for attempting the sketch of a poet's life is to throw light upon his poetry. In the case of Scott, whose verse forms only the earlier half of his writings, such a sketch would in strictness end with his forty-fifth year. It would be unpleasant, however, to break off thus: and the story of his career, even if he had not been author of "Marmion" and "Old Mortality," is in itself one of the most interesting which we possess. An eminently good and noble-hearted man, tried by almost equal extremes of fortune, and victorious over both,—the life of Scott would be a tragic drama in the fullest sense, moving and teaching us at once through pity, and love, and terror, even if he had not also, in many ways, deserved the title of greatness. The aim of these pages will hence be to present a biography, complete in its main points, and including some remarks on Scott's position as a writer, which the accompanying narrative will, it is hoped, render easily intelligible.

Scott's life may be conveniently divided into three periods: that of the child and the youth who had not yet found where his strength lay (1771–1799): that of his poetry, whether edited and translated by him, or original (1799–1814): that of his novels, his wealth and his poverty (1814–1832). The time when his powers were fully matured, and his happiest years, would lie about midway across the second and third of these periods; for the full "flower of his life" was fugitive in proportion to its brilliancy. A perceptible air of unity marks the lives of most poets. The character and circumstances of Scott, on the contrary, present a crowd of singular contrasts; there is a deep underlying harmony, which it is the main object of

this sketch to trace, but at first sight he is a strikingly complex creature; the number of antitheses about him, which aid in making him so representative a Scotchman, is the first and one of the main points which the reader should bear in mind. An antithesis of this kind meets us at once in the story; indeed, preceding the poet's birth, it exercised perhaps the most marked influence amongst the circumstances which moulded his career. Both in its position and its traditions, his family was eminently typical of much that we associate with his country. Though a solicitor of moderate means, at a time when the profession had not won its way to a liberal standing in popular estimation, Scott's father, also Walter, reckoned socially as of "gentle blood," in virtue less of his high character than of his Border descent, which was traced through the Scotts of Harden to the main stem (now holding the ducal honors of Buccleuch), in the fourteenth century. The coarse plundering life of this and other clans, whose restlessness and roving warfare were long the misfortune and misery of the "Marches," has received from Scott all the tints which poetry could throw over an age softened by distance; the romance which it had in his eyes may have been increased by the curious resemblance which the energetic anarchy of the Border families establishes between them and the clans, more correctly so called, of the Highlands; yet, if we turn from ballads to the actual story of the frontier raids, it is that common tale of unholy ravage and murder which rather deserved the curse, than the consecration of poetry. Remark also that the forays, so dear in the poet's eyes, do not belong to the warfare for the independence of Scotland; that they had very little political coloring, and were, in fact, picturesque fragments of a barbar-

ous time maintained long after date, through the mutual jealousy of the two neighbor kingdoms. They exhibit the law of hand against the law of head; or, again, from a more poetical point of view, they may be regarded as bold protests in favor of individuality, against the monotonizing character of civilized and peaceful existence. Like much that we shall have to note in Scott's own career, the border clans were, in a certain sense, practical anachronisms, whose very likeness to the wild Highlanders of the north placed them in striking contrast to the love of law and peaceful thrift which lies deep in the Scottish nature, and, until a few years before Scott's birth, led the Lowlanders to regard their Celtic fellow-countrymen with a contempt and hatred, in effacing which it was the noble mission of his own genius to be the main instrument.

These family details are here dwelt on, because they bear upon that quality which is peculiar to Scott's genius, and makes at once its strength and its weakness. It would be difficult to name another instance of a mind so habitually balanced between the real and the unreal. There have been those who had, for example, a stronger grasp of past ages; but they have either comprehended them without regretting, as Hallam and Macaulay; or have distinctly preferred them and adopted their ways of thought. Poets, again, have manifested as great a power as Scott over the actual and the present, as Burns and Crabbe,—but they had no sympathy with the past: or have chosen their subjects in the past, as Dryden in his Fables, and Byron in his Plays,—but theirs was a simple poetical expedient, not a sympathetic revival of former times: or they have lived in an ideal world, as Shelley,—but then that world was their own creation, and entirely

absorbed them: or they have believed in and reproduced their own age, together with one long anterior, as Milton,—but then their older subject-matter was religion: or, in another way, as Shakespeare, they have recast all ages in their own mind; or were barely conscious of the difference between the ages, as Chaucer and Dante. But it will strike every reader how decidedly Scott's poetical conception of the past, and his relations to the present, differ from those just enumerated. As a child of the critical eighteenth century, and the son of a shrewd Scotch solicitor, Scott was, on one side, a born skeptic in romance, the Middle Ages, and Jacobitism,—as a cadet of the Scotts of Harden, and a man of the strongest imaginative temperament, he was likewise a born believer. Now, not only his writings, which in the strictest sense reproduce himself, but his life and character, present a continual half-conscious attempt at a real and practical compromise between these opposing elements. In the details, what struck his contemporaries was plain but genial common sense; in the whole, what strikes the later student is the predominance of the poetical impulse. Whilst the peculiar blending of the elements is what gives Scott his place in our literature, and renders him singularly interesting as a man, it cannot be concealed that it carried certain weaknesses with it: he had *les défauts de ses qualités*. And in this compromise between past and present, romance and prose, which he attempted, beside that great and long-continued error which ruined his worldly prosperity, and dispossessed him of the castle of his dreams, one may note some minor inconsistencies, which have exposed him to censure from those who did not observe the peculiarity of his nature. Thus, although naturally one of the most independent of men, we find him treat-

ing the Prince Regent with an almost servility of deference, when offered the Poet Laureateship; although a Lowland Scot, only distantly and dimly sharing in Highland blood through a Campbell ancestor (the clan, we may remark in passing, towards which his writings show a marked dislike), when the Prince, then George IV, visited Edinburgh, Scott gave the pageantry of the reception a completely Celtic character,—forgetting at once not only that national feud between Lowlander and Highlander which he had been the first to set forth before the whole world, but even the historical proprieties of the occasion. He appeared himself in Highland dress, whilst the heir of the Hanoverian line wore the "Stewart tartan!" Scott's Border sympathies, again, led him to regard the profession of arms with a somewhat extreme admiration; but when his son desires to enter the army, he regrets the choice. In his politics we observe the same uncertain direction; whilst feeling in the strongest way for the poor, and by nature hostile to the violence and unfairness of party, we find him ever and anon lowering himself to the petty interests of the Toryism of Edinburgh, or abetting the coarse repression of popular spirit which discredited the Administrations of the time; and then, with a fitter sense of his vocation in life, adding a "so much for politics —about which, after all, my neighbors the *Blackcocks* know about as much as I do" (Lockhart's "Life of Scott," iii, 209; the edition of 1856, in ten volumes, is that quoted). That the reader may understand the kind of character who will be presented to him, these points are noted here; they will be illustrated by the details which follow. But is not Scott, in all this antithetically blended nature, shrewdness in details, romance in the whole,—minor inconsistencies, with a

general unity and individuality of character,—a perfect type of the common sense combined with the *ingenium perfervidum Scotorum*, a true representative of the great race amongst which it was the dearest pride of his heart to be numbered?

I.

"Every Scotchman," says Sir Walter Scott in his brief Autobiography, "has a pedigree." We need not trace his back in detail beyond his great-grandfather, the staunch old Jacobite known as *Beardie*, who died in 1729. Beardie's second son, Robert, a Whig, drove and sold the cattle which had been the plunder of his reiving ancestors; at other times farming the small estate of Sandy-knowe or Smailholme, midway between Melrose and Kelso. By marriage with a Haliburton, Robert Scott became for a time proprietor of Dryburgh Abbey. The eldest son, Walter, born 1729, settled in Edinburgh as a "Writer to the Signet;" and in that city, after the loss of several infants, Walter, third son of six children who survived, was born, August 15, 1771. His mother, Anne Rutherford, was daughter to a distinguished professor of medicine in the University, and a lady of the ancient family of Swinton; and "joined to a light and happy temper of mind, a strong turn to study poetry and works of imagination." Beyond these indications, little is known of Scott's mother to support the popular fancy which ascribes filial distinction to maternal qualities; in fact, the father, a man of fine but singular disposition, fills a far larger space in the reminiscences of the poet's earlier years, and was, long after, painted by him with loving fidelity in "Redgauntlet." A fever in infancy rendered Walter lame in his right leg, and he was sent for recovery to his grandfather

Robert, at Sandy-knowe. From this place, where Scott was nursed for about two years, dated his earliest recollections. Tales of the Jacobite risings, and of Border life and its heroes, neither as yet too distant for genuine tradition, were soon taught him; "Merrymen all," he says, "of the persuasion and calling of Robin Hood and Little John;" and one can imagine the romantic disguise under which the violent deeds of "auld Watt of Harden" and the rest, were presented by family pride to the child who was to immortalize them. Visits to Bath and elsewhere were made for the sake of Walter's health, and he so far threw off the weakness of limb that, until the early decay of his constitution, it hardly disqualified him from any vigorous exercise. Scott's lameness, like Byron's, impelled his eager and courageous disposition to a more than average display of physical energy; one may trace to it, in some degree, the rather overstrained emphasis laid by Scott on field sports and volunteer drill whilst his strength lasted; excess in which, not improbably, was one reason why he found himself an old man before fifty. Ingenious excuses are never wanting to give the body more than its due share; and when there is activity of mind also, as in Scott and Byron, it takes its revenge in premature decay. On the other hand, the boy's lameness had a nobler result; giving him leisure for a large range of reading,—miscellaneous indeed, but lying in those imaginative regions, the air of which strengthens the higher nature within us. He entered the Grammar School of Edinburgh in 1778. A letter written by a gifted lady presents an excellent picture of the child as he was at six,—indeed, of Scott as he remained through life: "boy forever," in Shakespeare's phrase, with the lasting childhood and sensitiveness of genius.

"I last night supped in Mr. Walter Scott's. He has the most extraordinary genius of a boy I ever saw. He was reading a poem to his mother when I went in. I made him read on; it was the description of a shipwreck. His passion rose with the storm. He lifted his eyes and hands. *There's the mast gone*, says he; *crash it goes!—they will all perish!* After his agitation, he turns to me: *That is too melancholy; I had better read you something more amusing.* I preferred a little chat, and asked his opinion of Milton and other books he was reading, which he gave me wonderfully. . . . When taken to bed last night, he told his aunt he liked that lady [Mrs. Cockburn, the writer], *for I think she is a virtuoso like myself.—Dear Walter*, says Aunt Jenny, *what is a virtuoso?—Don't ye know? Why, it's one who wishes and will know everything.*"

Those about Scott may have been already impressed, like Mrs. Cockburn, with his mental energy and determination to "know everything." But in the Autobiography he adopts another tone, which reappears in his later letters. He was conscious that industry had not come to him without a struggle. About one of his brothers he remarks, that he had "the same determined indolence that marked us all." No description could, at first sight, appear less applicable to himself. If there be one constant attribute of real genius, it is vast capacity for and enjoyment of labor. Genius often makes us feel that it is almost synonymous with *patience*, as Buffon and Reynolds called it. And it would be difficult to find a man of genius whose recorded works,—never more than a portion of the man's whole work,—are more extensive and varied than Scott's. He had, in the highest degree, another charming quality, often, though not so essentially an attribute of intellectual excellence—

Modesty. Hence, throughout his life he undervalued himself, and thought little of his own energy. Yet we cannot doubt that this "determined indolence," like the irritability of temper which he so subdued that few suspected its existence, was a real element in his nature. At school (1778–1783), Scott's zeal for study is inferior to the ardor of Shelley; he takes not the slightest interest in what is not only the most perfect, but the most essentially "romantic" of literatures,—that of Greece; even in Latin going only far enough to set the highest value upon the modern verse of Buchanan, and after him, on Lucan and Claudian. He was satisfied with a working knowledge of French, German, Italian, and Spanish. Perhaps the family failing expended itself in confining his studies to the circle marked out by strong creative impulse, the history, manners, romances, and poetry of mediæval and modern Europe. Looking back now at the result, the Poems and the Novels, one is inclined to say that Scott in all this followed the imperious promptings of nature. This, however, was not his own judgment. He regretted nothing more bitterly than his want of the severe classical training. "I forgot the very letters of the Greek alphabet," he says in the Autobiography of 1808, "a loss never to be repaired, considering what that language is, and who they were who employed it in their compositions." And again, "I would at this moment give half the reputation I have had the good fortune to acquire, if by doing so I could rest the remaining part upon a sound foundation." Within the range noticed, however, his "appetite for books was as ample and undiscriminating as it was indefatigable; few ever read so much," he adds, "or to so little purpose." Spenser, Tasso's "Jerusalem" in the English, "above all, Bishop Percy's Reliques of

Ancient Poetry," are specified; and although throughout his life Scott exhibited a reluctance to employ his powerful mind on subjects requiring hard thought, and was disposed to defer any work upon which he was engaged to the last, yet in the main we may regard the "determined indolence" as absorbed into the meditative atmosphere (if we may use the word) of the poetical nature: as the undersoil whence so many masterpieces of imaginative writing were destined to grow. There is a strong general likeness on this point between Scott and the greatest of his contemporaries in poetry: and the words in which Wordsworth described himself would have borne an equal application to his friend:

> My whole life I have lived in pleasant thought,
> As if life's business were a summer mood.

"My life," Scott himself says, in one of the most remarkable passages of his Diary (Dec. 27, 1825), "though not without its fits of waking and strong exertion, has been a sort of dream, spent in

> Chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy.

I have worn a wishing-cap, the power of which has been to divert present griefs by a touch of the wand of imagination, and gild over the future by prospects more fair than can be realized." Scott's character was essentially formed and finished in early youth, and these words may be considered the key to his whole career and character. Worldly wisdom, love of social rank, passion for lands and goods;—these are the motives by which it has been often assumed that he was guided. Mr. Carlyle even appears in his re-

markable Essay to regard Scott as unentitled to the claim of greatness, because he did not throw his strength into grasping the problems of modern life or the eternal difficulties of human thought,—and treats him as an eminently genial and healthy man of the world, whose writings were rather pieces of skilful and rapid manufacture for the day, than likely to prove "heirlooms forever." But so "antithetically mixed" was his nature, that at the same time he was in the spirit hidden away with poetry and the past, and moving among romantic worlds of his own creation. Viewed from one side, Scott, as printer and lawyer, with "a thread of the attorney in him," as "laird" and man of society, appears in unromantic contrast to most of his "brothers in immortal verse:" viewed from another, it may be doubted whether any of his contemporaries lived the life of the poet so completely.

A strong capacity for such work as his nature secretly preferred, and towards which he was unconsciously finding his way, marks the boyhood of Scott. This found its main exercise at first in a love for inventing and relating marvellous tales which amounted to real passion. "Whole holidays were spent in this pastime, which continued for two or three years, and had, I believe, no small effect in directing the turn of my imagination to the chivalrous and romantic in poetry and prose." "He used to interest us," writes a lady who was then his playmate, "by telling us the *visions*, as he called them, which he had lying alone. . . . Child as I was, I could not help being highly delighted with his description of the glories he had seen. . . . Recollecting these descriptions," of which we cannot but regret that she preserved no memorial, "radiant as they were, I have often thought since,

that there must have been a bias in his mind to superstition—the marvellous seemed to have such power over him, though the mere offspring of his own imagination, that the expression of his face, habitually that of genuine benevolence, mingled with a shrewd innocent humor, changed greatly while he was speaking of these things, and showed a deep intenseness of feeling, as if he were awed even by his own recital." Scott, as he was throughout life, is again before us in this little delineation; the kindness, the superstition, the shrewdness: and one already sees "Waverley" and "Lammermoor" in their infancy.

Meanwhile that other element of poetry which is only second in Scott's writings to the picture of human life,—the natural landscape,—began to assert its influence over him. Actors were thronging fast within the theatre of his imagination; the first sketches of the background and scenery for the drama were now supplied. From a visit to Kelso, "the most beautiful, if not the most romantic village in Scotland," Scott traced his earliest consciousness of the magic of Nature. Wordsworth's passion was for

> the Visions of the hills
> And Souls of lonely places.

The passion of Scott differed from this through the leading place which historical memories held in his heart. "The romantic feelings which I have described as predominating in my mind gradually rested upon and associated themselves with the grand features of the landscape around me; and the historical incidents or traditional legends connected with many of them gave to my admiration a sort of intense impression of reverence, which at times made my heart feel too big for its bosom. From this time the love of

natural beauty, more especially when combined with ancient ruins, or remains of our fathers' piety or splendor, became with me an insatiable passion, which I would willingly have gratified by travelling over half the globe." Scott's transfer from the Edinburgh High School to the College (1783–1786), probably gave him the first freedom to indulge this impulse within bounds which, though narrow in themselves, were of inexhaustible interest to his sympathetic imagination. Without "travelling over half the globe" he could create a realm of his own, sufficient for himself and for his readers. It is astonishing to look at the map, and observe within how small a radius from Edinburgh the hundred little places lie which he has made familiar names throughout the whole civilized world. We have noticed that Scott's father (with himself in youth), is painted in "Redgauntlet." Nothing was ever better contrasted in a romance than these two characters; and one sees that the real *Alan Fairford* was already beginning at college those adventurous ways which may have made the old Writer to the Signet feel that the wild moss-trooping blood of Harden was once more at work within the veins of his gallant boy. A wise confidence left Walter free. He wandered for days together over the historical sites of the neighborhood, and when at home, in lieu of devotion to the prosaic mysteries of the Scottish law, was able to please his fancy by founding that collection of wayside songs and historical relics which filled so large a space in the innocent happiness of his after-years, and was not less a necessary of life to him than his cabinet of rocks and minerals is to the geologist.

The mode in which Scott observed Nature is strictly parallel to his representation of human life. As he rarely enters into the depths of character, pre-

ferring to exhibit it through action, and painting rather the great general features of an age than dwelling on the details for their own sake, so he mainly deals with the landscape; two or three admirable pictures excepted. Compare his descriptions with those by Wordsworth, Keats, or Shelley, and the difference in regard to the points noted will be felt at once. Scott was aware of this. "I was unable," says the Autobiography, "with the eye of a painter to dissect the various parts of the scene, to comprehend how the one bore upon the other. . . . I have never, indeed, been capable of doing this with precision or nicety." A curious testimony is borne to the truth of this remark by Scott's failure (like Goethe's) to master even the rudiments of landscape drawing. "Even the humble ambition, which I long cherished, of making sketches of those places which interested me, from a defect of eye or of hand was totally ineffectual." But this absence of power over landscape forms was compensated for by a singularly fine perception of color, examples of which have been given by Mr. Ruskin in the interesting criticisms on Scott contained in his "Modern Painters." Scott's almost total want of ear for music was a calamity which he shared with a large number of great poets; the strong sense of the melody in words and the harmonies of rhythm appearing to leave no space in their organization for inarticulate music.

> —Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
> Are sweeter;

if true at all, is true only of the poet.

Beside the irresistible impulse which directed Scott's reading to "romantic" and poetical literature, to story-telling, and to country wanderings, he was

seriously impeded by illness from pursuing his college studies. And by the time the Academical course was concluded, the passion which governed his youth, and perhaps secretly colored the complexion of his future life, had already fallen upon him. Little has been told of this early love: force of feeling, and force to repress the signs of feeling, are two of the principal elements in Scott's character; he undergoes evil with a pathetic simplicity; he suffers in silence. From what, however, we can learn, it is natural to read in the "love that never found his earthly close" the true source of that peculiar shade of pensive melancholy which runs like a silver thread through almost everything he wrote, is heard as a "far-off Æolian note" in all his poetry, and breaks out at last during his later years of misfortune with strange power in his "Journal." This strong passion kept him safe from "the ambush of young days," and threw over his whole life the halo of a singular purity. Meantime the first result was probably to reconcile him to work for his livelihood, and even prepare for following his father's profession,—alien from Scott's nature as a conveyancer's office must have been. He was bound apprentice for four years (1786–1790). An acquaintance with Scottish law, which he used with effect in some of his novels, was the chief fruit of this apprenticeship; for we can hardly reckon as a gain that half-introduction to business habits on which he afterwards relied with so fatal a security. It was not, however, as a "Writer to the Signet" that Scott finally entered the law (1792); having been turned towards the more liberal career of an Advocate by the influence of the gently-born intellectual society with which he now became familiar. Burns, of whom he has left a striking description, he

only saw; but with most or all of the remaining eminent Scotchmen of the time he was acquainted. Clerk of Eldin, Corehouse, Jeffrey, and before long the dearest of his early friends, William Erskine, are prominent amongst many other names; for men lived together then after the most social fashion in Edinburgh (that excellent feature in life which is lost when capital cities grow large), and clubs and conviviality of all kinds abounded. This was a brilliant stage in Scott's career; perhaps the most essentially happy: love, fearful yet warm with hope; open, numerous, and equal friendships; the first introduction to the literature most congenial to his nature, that of Germany; last, not least, the first sight of the Scottish Highlands. These regions, the romantic manners of which were to be so brightly painted in his writings, by one of the curious contrasts which are frequent in his life, he entered on a legal visit to evict certain Maclarens;—as he was afterwards the first to carry a gig, Mr. Carlyle's symbol of modern "respectability," into the depths of Liddesdale.

This district, under the name of which the best of the Scottish Marches are apparently included, lay within view of Scott's future home, and was the true nursing-ground of his genius. Great as he is in describing scenes from Scottish history, great in his pictures of the Highlands, great in delineating life in Edinburgh, or Perth, or Glasgow, he seems to move with the largest and freest step, when his tale or song is of the Border. For several successive years (1792–1798) he appears to have made excursions thither (partially under the excuse of professional business), when he explored the wild recesses, and observed the wilder life of a race who had not yet been civilized into uniformity; drinking in enjoy-

ment at every pore, "feeling his life," as Wordsworth says of the child, "in every limb;" and as the friend who guided him through the land truly observed, *makin' himsell a' the time*. This friend, Mr. Shortreed, was of no small value to Scott. Already he began to show one attribute of genius, that of attracting others to co-operate with him. The old ballads, in collecting which he was assisted by Shortreed, formed the basis of the first book in which Scott displayed his originality; and we soon after find that he gained similar aid from Dr. Elliott, Messrs. Skene, Ritson, Leyden, and finally from Mr. Train, who provided some of the most effective materials for the Novels, and plays an important though hidden part through Scott's life.

This was the time when the shock of the French Revolution recoiled with the greatest force upon the country. England had joined that monarchical alliance which aimed at compelling France to restore the order of things lately swept away, which had succeeded only in uniting France as one man against her invaders, and which now, in turn, feared revenging invasion from the armies of the Republic. It is well known how powerfully and diversely the stirring politics of the time affected thinking men in these islands. The movement which was inspiration to Wordsworth, was reaction to Scott. It converted the poetical Jacobitism which was part of his imaginative inheritance from older days into a fervent Toryism. This ardor impelled him now (1797) to take the lead in forming a body of Volunteer Cavalry, for which the political creed then dominant in Scotland afforded him ready followers. Something also of Scott's traditional interest in matters relating to war blended with his patriotic energy; and even

the wish to prove, despite of nature, that lameness was no hindrance to physical activity, had its part in the rather excessive zeal with which for some years he threw himself into this mimic and (happily) bloodless campaigning. With similar fervency he entered into the politics of the day. But politics, like poetry, must be studied as an art with the best powers of the mind, if a man is to reach valid conclusions, or show himself a practical statesman; and as Scott, throughout his career, hardly gave to political questions more than the leisure moments of a powerful mind, there is no reason for wonder if this be not the most satisfactory feature in his life, nor one which needs detain the biographer. Scott's insight failed him here; and, as with his study of the law, the only valuable fruit of the years devoted to cavalry drill was a certain accuracy,—contested of course by professional critics,—in his descriptions of warfare. It may be suspected that he and Gibbon pleased themselves with finding, in the vividness of their narratives of battle, some tangible result from months wasted in camp. Genius, however, returns always to its natural track, and abandons imperfect interests. But Scott was as yet totally unaware of his proper vocation. Already indeed love had drawn from him a few lines of exquisitely tender sadness: he had translated the ballad "Lenore" from the German of Bürger, and may have been at work upon Goethe's early drama "Goetz;" yet he almost prided himself upon contempt of literature as a man's work in life. How singular is this utter self-unconsciousness! Here was the man who was to turn the minds of a whole nation to the picturesque and romantic side of poetry. He was to restore an ideal loyalty to the later Stuarts. He was to make the Middle

Ages live once more. But, engrossed as he was at this time by foreign revolutions, no one in Edinburgh could have known less than the youthful Advocate of the change, itself hardly less than a revolution, which he was destined to work in the thoughts and sentiments of his fellow-creatures.

II.

We now approach the second step in Scott's life. In the course of 1796 the long dream of youthful love was over. Little has been told, perhaps little was divulged, of the reasons for the final decision; the lines above alluded to (those "To a Violet" in the following collection), cannot be regarded as strict evidence to the facts; and Scott's stern habit of repression where he felt most, has concealed from us not only what he was compelled to bear, but how he bore it. He "had his dark hour" during a solitary ride in Perthshire; the wise sympathy of a friend (afterwards Countess of Purgstall) was some little aid; but the wound bled inwardly, and the evidence appears strong, that, like all passion suppressed in deference to ideas of manliness or philosophy, this worked in him with a secret fever. However these things may have been, next year he married (Dec., 1797) a pretty Mdlle. Charpentier (daughter to a French lady, one of the royalist emigrants) whom he met and wooed at the little watering-place, Gilsland, in Cumberland; a village which he afterwards described in his only novel of contemporary life, the tragic "St. Ronan's Well." A very brief acquaintance preceded their engagement; it is probable that the congruity of sentiment and taste between them was comparatively slight; and at the distance of "sixty years since" and more, it may be allowable

to add that although attended by considerable happiness, faithful attachment on his wife's part, and much that gave a charm to life, this marriage does not appear to have fully satisfied the poet's inner nature.

We are here referring to that more hidden and more sensitive side of existence which it is the fate—not altogether the happier fate—of the poet to live; which makes the difference between him and other men; and to trace which, as delicately but firmly as we may, is the essential object of the biographer. But it is not meant that Scott would have been conscious of anything incomplete in this chapter of his story. Not only did he find the substantial blessings of home in his marriage, but it incidentally led him to the felicity, inferior to that alone, of practically discovering his own work in life. He now (1798) took a house in Castle Street, Edinburgh, and a cottage at Lasswade, within the northeastern end of Eskdale. The first was for his attendance at the bar, where he "swept the boards of the Outer House," waiting for briefs which rarely came; and enjoying to the full the cheery convivialities and frank good-fellowship of his town friends. Meantime, his heart was gradually withdrawn to Lasswade, where he could live in the past with poetry and history; where the old Scottish memories to which Burns himself was not attached with more devoted passion, were around him; where, also, began his friendship with the chief house of his clan. To the three peers who bore the title of Buccleuch between this time and his death, especially to Charles, fourth duke, Scott was attracted by the whole force of his nature: not only respecting them with feudal devotion as heads of his blood and family, but loving them as men who sympathized deeply with him in their views of life, re-

ligion, politics, relations between rich and poor, home-pursuits and affections; and who systematically used great wealth and power for the happiness of their friends and dependents. There are no pages in Scott's life more pleasing than those which paint his intimacy with this truly noble family group; here he carried out with the greatest success his poetical identification between the old world and the new; and to him, in turn, the family name owes a distinction beyond that of Montmorency, Dalberg, or Howard. Under these and other combining influences Scott now added to the ancient Border Ballads, which he was collecting, his own original poems, some, written for Lewis's *Tales of Wonder*, based on German sentiment; others founded upon the native songs, to which he gave a wider plan with consummate taste. He printed (1799) his translation from Goethe's play, and becoming acquainted with Ellis, Ritson, Heber, and others of that excellent band of scholars by whom our knowledge of the Middle Ages was placed upon a sure footing, turned resolutely to the study of mediæval imaginative literature, which (1802) issued in the "Border Minstrelsy."

This book marks the great crisis in Scott's life. Henceforth, even if unconsciously to himself, his real work is literature. The publication was not only the first that made his name known, but led Scott into what proved the most serious business transaction of his life. Many years before he had made friends with James Ballantyne, a young man of whose ability and disposition he thought highly. Ballantyne printed the "Minstrelsy;" at Scott's advice he established a house in Edinburgh; and by 1805 the two became partners in trade. Before long, taking a younger brother, John, into the concern, they added a pub-

lishing house to the printing; and Scott's fortune and fall were in due time the result. This partnership is on all accounts the least agreeable chapter in Scott's life; it is only of interest now as illustrating his character. The essence of that character has been defined as an attempt at a practical, not less than at an imaginative compromise between past and present,—between prose (one might almost say) and poetry; ideals realized and realities idealized. The trade-partnership fatally partook in this perilous and delicate compromise. Beside the final loss of wealth and health, Scott's memory has been hence exposed to some misinterpretation. In face of the result, and the clear proofs how it came to pass, he has received almost equal honors for his practical sense and for his greatness in romantic literature. Two men, in fact, are painted in the one Scott of the "Biography;" the able man of the world in his office, and the poet in his study; giving, with equal mastery and ease, an hour to verse and an hour to business, and appearing to his friends meantime as the Scottish gentleman of property. Now, such a compound being as this could hardly have existed. It is against nature; and, if the estimate here given be correct, there is no nature which it is less like than Scott's. Where the poetical character truly exists, it always predominates; it cannot put off the poet like a dress, and assume the lawyer or the laird; it "moveth altogether, if it move at all." This point must be insisted on, because it is vital to understanding the man and his work. The very specialty of Scott is, not that he presented the ideal gentleman just described, who wrote poetry and novels as pastime, and entered into business like a shrewd Scotchman who knew the worth of money, but that he valued wealth in order to embody in

visible form his inner world of romance, and lived more completely within the circle of his creations than any of his contemporaries. This poetical temperament has its perils, and might have driven a less healthy nature into injurious isolation and eccentricity. But, as a man of eminently sane mind and genial disposition, and fortified by the training of his early years, Scott had not to go out of the world, as it were, in order to "idealize realities." The common duties of life glowed into romance for him; his friends, Lowland and Highland, were dear not only in themselves, but as representatives of the two historical races of the land; his estate, when he bought one, was rather an inclosure of ancient associations, a park of poetry, if the phrase may be allowed, decorated with "a romance in stone and lime," than what the Lords of Harden and Bowhill would have looked on as landed property.

The picture here drawn, although different from the estimate often taken of Scott, rests upon the evidence of his writings, and of the copious materials contained in the Biography, and not only answers to what we read of his sentiments and mode of thought, conscious or unconscious, but can alone explain how he came to be the author of the poems and the novels. Mr. Lockhart describes him as the finished man of the world. Mr. Carlyle, again, seems to speak of him as, in the main, a manufacturer of hasty books for the purpose of making money and a landed estate to rival neighboring country-gentlemen. Both views appear to be unintentionally unjust to Scott, and discordant with his recorded character; and both fail equally to explain how such imaginative writing as his in prose and verse had any room to come into being. Some great artists, we read, have enjoyed the

possession of wealth. Others have been gratified by social position. But in what art has the love of money, or the love of rank, ever been the root of masterpieces? Who has moved the world with these levers? You cannot grow poetry without the poetical soil. If at first sight this be less visible in Scott than in men like Byron or Shelley, may not the reason be, not that the nature of the poet was absent, but that it was more closely and curiously combined with the man of common life than in others? The writer, at least, desires to submit this view as the possible solution of a difficult problem.

Walter Scott, it will probably be agreed, ranks among the great of our race, both as a writer and as a man; but in his portrait, as in every true portrait, there are shadows. Some weakness is blended intimately with his strength; as we have noticed, he cannot escape "the weak side of his gifts." His wish was certainly to conceal his inner or poetical mind from the world. Perhaps he sometimes concealed it from himself. One fallacy hence arising (to return now to his commercial affairs), was an overestimate of his practical powers. "From beginning to end, he piqued himself on being a man of business." Against this it is probably enough to set the fact, that the books of his house were never fairly balanced till they were in the hands of his creditors. That the Ballantyne brothers had, each in his way, equally vague ideas on the matter, was known perfectly to Scott, who by 1812 found himself involved in his first difficulties. Then the vast success of the Novels once more floated the house: but although the partnership was enlarged by the admission of a really able commercial man, Constable the publisher, the reckless spirit which his adventurous nature

brought with him, combined with the peculiar money-difficulties of 1825, only hastened the concluding bankruptcy of 1826. These twenty years of business, unsound from the outset, have supplied materials for a long dispute, with whom the fault justly rested. But enough has been here stated to explain the general case; we need not go further into a matter of which, with even more than usual truth, one might say that both sides were honestly wrong, and all, partners in a catastrophe for which all were responsible. The so-called *men of business and plain common sense*, as we daily see, were not one atom more truly entitled to those epithets than the romantic Poet. But, what had the "Ariosto of the North" to do in concerns like this?

A probable element in the ultimate failure of the House of Ballantyne and Company was the fact that the partner with capital sedulously concealed himself from the public. The news that Scott was one of the firm startled the world far more than the news that he was the sole author of the "Waverley Novels." It is obvious in how many ways this concealment must have hampered business. One reason of it was a certain pleasure in mystery, inherent in Scott's nature, and displayed also when "Triermain" and "Harold" were published. The wish was, that both of these poems should be taken for the work of his friend Erskine. In case of the Novels, however, the desire to escape the nuisance of commonplace praise and face-flattery was a further inducement. It was not so wise a motive that co-operated to prompt the commercial *incognito*. It might have been expected that he would have been led to avoid this by natural shrewdness, and "the thread of the attorney in him." But the peculiarity of Scott is that something dream-

like and imaginative, together with something practical and prosaic, unites in all the more important phases of his life; past and present, romance and reality, meet in him at once; he is in the world, and not in it, as it were, at the same time; he is almost too unselfconscious. The favorable side of this strangely balanced nature has been already indicated; it gave us in his Poems and Novels together the most brilliant and the most diversified "spectacle of human life" which we have had since Shakespeare; it gave Scott himself many years of pure and peculiar happiness. On the other hand, we have the failure, after long-continued struggles, of his material prosperity, and (closely connected with this) the narrow and even unjust view which he always took, or rather, took always in public, of literature and his own share in it. He could not fully work out his ideal of life, however we interpret it; his career has many curious inconsistencies. There is nothing which Mr. Lockhart notes more pointedly than Scott's aversion from what is called "literature as a profession." He indorses with approval, as Scott's own view, the words of a friend, who wrote in 1799 to encourage him in perseverance at the bar, "I rather think men of business have produced as good poetry in their by-hours as the professed regulars;" an assertion of which (it need hardly be added) the writer does not furnish any proof. To the same effect it is added (1815) "that Scott never considered any amount of literary distinction as entitled to be spoken of in the same breath with mastery in the higher departments of practical life. To have done things worthy to be written, was in his eyes a dignity to which no man made any approach, who had only written things worthy to be read;" and the steam-engine, safety-

lamp, and campaigns of the Duke of Wellington are presently named as examples.

There can be no doubt that the biographer has here truly reported, not merely what he admired Scott for thinking, but Scott's own conscious idea regarding his life. And if this had been the whole truth, there can equally be no doubt that we should never have had a "Marmion" or a "Bride of Lammermoor." Indeed, except as the opinion of so distinguished a man as Scott, it would hardly deserve examination. For what human being would seriously pretend to compare with each other things so generically different as a battle, a scientific invention, and a song? In what balances should we weigh "Othello" and Trafalgar, the commercial policy of Sir Robert Peel and "The Advancement of Learning,"—or decide which has been of most value to England? How is the one less a "deed" than the other? Scott's profound modesty as to his own genius was undoubtedly one motive in his estimate of literature; but even this could not have blinded so sensible a man to its untenability, had he not been swayed by something of that instinct for living an old-world life in the present, which lay at the root of his character. We have here one of his practical anachronisms. He puts himself in the place of the Minstrel of the "Lay" at Newark; he leans to the time when hands were more honored, at least more powerful than brains; he wavers in the delicate compromise which was to have united the spirit of Scott of Harden and Scott of Abbotsford. A similar sentiment governs his aversion from "literature as a profession." Much might be said for and against this feeling; yet it is hardly more true of Goldsmith, Southey, or Thackeray, that they made letters their profession,

than of Walter Scott. Few men whose work can be properly classed as literature have written so much or so continuously; none, probably, have earned more by their writings. What he actually was as a man of business, meanwhile, is recorded in his life. What he was as a lawyer has been described by himself. "My profession and I" (by 1800) "came to stand nearly upon the footing which honest Slender consoled himself on having established with Mistress Ann Page, *There was no great love between us at the beginning, and it pleased heaven to decrease it on further acquaintance.*" In fact, at the point where we left the narrative, Scott, already enriched by his marriage, was about to obtain the sheriff-deputeship of Selkirkshire; and soon after (1806) he left the bar for a Clerkship of Session; offices which together gave him a good income, and had the additional advantage of duties that, except a certain amount of attendance and of rapid and accurate penmanship, were almost nominal. The criticism to which these pleasant places seem to have exposed Scott from those who did not share in his political devotion to the house of Dundas, then paramount in Scotland, was unfair; but one cannot say that he is entitled to more than the praise of prudence for obtaining ease and leisure by this ancient and easy method:

Deus nobis hæc otia fecit!

And, in fact, before the salary from the clerkship, held at first in reversion, fell in, the sale of Scott's works was already beginning, both directly in itself and indirectly through his partnership with the Ballantynes, to surpass, as it before long reduced to comparative insignificance, any sources of revenue,—ex-

cept those which he thus derived from the "profession of literature."

Enough, however, has been said on Scott's practical, though morally blameless, inconsistency in this section of his career. Important as the matter of income was for many years to his healthy enjoyment of existence, and at last in giving a direction to his writing, its real importance lies in that to which we gladly turn,—that he was thus enabled to live the life for which he had been planned by Nature. Is not what is most desirable for man contained in this, when "Nature's holy plan" happens to be such as she marked out for Scott? There are several types of a noble life, some of which may be loftier or more striking than his; yet we do not see how he could have done his peculiar work otherwise. One of the masters in the highest human knowledge—the science of man's nature—defined the perfection of life as "the serene exercise of thought" (we must thus paraphrase his own word *Theoria*), "in a state of independence, and leisure, and security so far as man may attain it, together with a complete measure of his days; for nothing incomplete can enter into blessedness. Such a life," he however adds, "would be in itself above the height of humanity." Perhaps Wordsworth approached this ideal nearer than any distinguished man of Scott's generation, and it is easy to see the features in which Scott fell short; yet on the whole, if the estimate here taken be just, he also was not far from the lofty standard of Aristotle.

We return to trace Scott's career; fortunate, if we have truly and distinctly traced what manner of man he was; for it is only if we feel this, that Mr. Lockhart's detailed narrative of his life, the interest of which cannot be transferred to an abridgment, gains

its fullest charm and significance. Some contemporary poets now became friends of Scott; he had only seen Burns as a boy, and it is curious that, closely as their lines met in some points, Burns has left no sign of influence on Scott's writings. A greater effect was produced by his intercourse with Wordsworth, whose elevation and simplicity of mind impressed Scott with a sense of his predominance, not the less striking because it was not consciously avowed. The same tacit recognition is traceable in Byron; one seems also to find it among all Wordsworth's contemporaries in verse; they know that he is the head of the family. "Differing from him in very many points of taste," writes Scott in 1820, "I do not know a man more to be venerated for uprightness of heart and loftiness of genius." Wordsworth, in turn, has recorded his estimate of Scott's power as a poet in some memorable verses, his feeling for the man in an early letter: "Your sincere friend, for such I will call myself, though slow to use a word of such solemn meaning to any one" (ii, 167). Scott had for some years been sheriff of Selkirkshire; and that he might live within the district he now (1804) moved to Ashestiel, a single house within the old Ettrick Forest, upon the banks of Tweed, not much above its junction with Yarrow. "The river itself is separated from the high bank on which the house stands only by a narrow meadow of the richest verdure. Opposite, and all around, are the green hills. The valley there is narrow, and the aspect in every direction is that of perfect pastoral repose." "Not equal in picturesque beauty to the banks of Clyde," says Scott himself, "but so sequestered, so simple, and so solitary, that it seems just to have beauty enough to delight its inhabitants." And again, as a crowning recommenda-

tion, he describes Ashestiel to his friend the distinguished antiquary, Mr. G. Ellis: "In the very centre of the ancient Reged," otherwise known as the Scoto-British realm of Strathclyde. These passages are extracted, because the general descriptions apply also to the scenery of Abbotsford, except that the landscape is there wider, and more bare, and because they indicate one dominant motive in Scott's mind. The presence of ancient national associations was precisely the point which determined his choice of property; the *genius loci* which, with an overpowering influence, bound him all his life to the Border, and led him there from Italy to die.

By this time, through study, the collection of traditions, experience of men high or low in rank, solitary thought and imaginative vision, almost all the materials on which Scott was to work were ready. When the first fruits of this long preparation appeared in the "Lay of the Last Minstrel" (1805), its success was not less surprising to the author than to the public. Begun as a ballad on a large scale to please Lady Dalkeith, gradually moulded into a metrical romance, or "Waverley Novel" in verse, and interspersed with those allusive transitional pieces which no other English poet has managed so gracefully, binding past and present together in one, Scott had here unconsciously put his ideal of life into form, and fairly "found himself." "Marmion," the most powerful of the poems, followed in 1808; when also Scott published an elaborate edition of Dryden. Some similar work in the way of skilful editing or compiling he almost always had on hand; he did as much thus for students as if he had not, at the same time, been the Scott who, in Wordsworth's phrase, was "the whole world's darling." "Labor," he said himself, "is

absolutely the charter by which we hold existence." Great regularity, with perfect order and neatness in the arrangements of his library, assisted him in accomplishing so much. Rising at six, he "broke the neck of the day's work" before breakfast; soon after noon, he was on his horse; outdoor employment and conversation completed the day; but though study was not resumed, the eye and the mind of such a man were never idle. He knew when he had finished his work; put his best into it, and had done: was in good humor with all his tasks, and thought little of them when finished. So curiously had the "determined indolence" of his nature been conquered by the imperious force of creative imagination! During the next year or two we find him planning the "Quarterly Review;" active in encouraging Mr. H. Siddons and a younger theatrical friend, Mr. D. Terry, on the stage; active also in his interest in the war against Napoleon, and (less felicitously) engaged in local politics; then, publishing the "Lady of the Lake." "Don Roderick," unsuccessful in its attempt to blend the past history of Spain with the interests of the Peninsular War, followed (1811); "Triermain," and "Rokeby," the scene of which is laid within the lands of the most valued friend of Scott's middle life, Mr. Morritt, in 1813; the "Lord of the Isles" (1815), and "Harold" (1817), complete the list of Poems.

Some general remarks on Scott's style as a writer have been reserved for the notice of his Novels. These have naturally overshadowed his fame as a poet; they are more singularly and strikingly original—more unique in literature; and the form of the prose story, admitting readily of narrative details, and allowing the author to explain remote allusions

as he advances, was more capable of giving free play for Scott's tastes and materials, than poetry, however irregular in its structure. Hence he did not make himself quite so much at home in his Poems. Perhaps they depend a little too much on archæology; the ancient manners, dresses, and customs painted occasionally compete in interest with the delineation of human character; those marvellous scenes from common life which are true in all ages, or those sketches of contemporary manners, which Scott has employed with such skill and power to counterpoise the antiquarian element in the Novels, could hardly find a place in verse. He has indeed given us something of this kind in the beautiful Introductions to the "Lay" and "Marmion," and, less successfully, though even here with much grace, in "Triermain;" but they are not wrought up into a whole; they do not form an integral portion of the poem. On the other hand, the metrical descriptions of scenery, if not more picturesque and vivid than those of the romances, tell more forcibly; they also relieve the narrative, by allowing the writer's own thoughts and interests to touch our hearts: an expedient used by Scott with singular skill. The "Edinburgh" of "Marmion" is a splendid example; but others are scattered through the less familiarly known poems, which, it is hoped, will in this edition find a fresh circle of readers, who are little likely to regret the study.

Scott's incompleteness of style, which is more injurious to poetry than to prose, his "careless glance and reckless rhyme," have been alleged by a great writer of our time as one reason why he is now less popular as a poet than he was in his own day, when from two to three thousand copies of his metrical ro-

mances were yearly sold. Beside these faults, which are visible almost everywhere, the charge that he wants depth and penetrative insight, has been often brought. He does not "wrestle with the mystery of existence," it is said; he does not try to solve the problems of human life. Scott, could he have foreseen this criticism, would probably not have been very careful to answer it. He might have allowed its correctness, and said that one man might have this work to do, but his was another. High and enduring pleasure, however conveyed, is the end of poetry. "Othello" gives this by its profound display of tragic passion. "Paradise Lost" gives it by its religious sublimity: "Childe Harold" by its meditative picturesqueness: the "Lay" by its brilliant delineation of ancient life and manners. These are but scanty samples of the vast range of poetry. In that house are many mansions. All poets may be seers and teachers; but some teach directly, others by a less ostensible and larger process. Scott never lays bare the workings of his mind, like Goethe or Shelley; he does not draw out the moral of the landscape, like Wordsworth; rather, after the fashion of Homer and the writers of the ages before criticism, he presents a scene, and leaves it to work its own effect on the reader. His most perfect and lovely poems, the short songs which occur scattered through the metrical or the prose narratives, are excellent instances. He is the most unselfconscious of our modern poets; perhaps, of all our poets; the difference in this respect between him and his friends Byron and Wordsworth is like a difference of centuries. If they give us the inner spirit of modern life, or of nature, enter into our perplexities, or probe our deeper passions, Scott has a dramatic faculty not less delightful and precious.

He hence attained eminent success in one of the rarest and most difficult aims of Poetry,—sustained vigor, clearness, and interest in narration. If we reckon up the poets of the world, we may be surprised to find how very few (dramatists not included) have accomplished this, and may be hence led to estimate Scott's rank in his art more justly. One looks through the English poetry of the first half of the century in vain, unless it be here and there indicated in Keats, for such a power of vividly throwing himself into others as that of Scott. His contemporaries, Crabbe excepted, paint emotions. He paints men when strongly moved. They draw the moral; but he can invent the fable. It would be rash to try to strike a balance between men, each so great in his own way; the picture of one could not be painted with the other's palette; all are first-rate in their kind; and every reader can choose the style which gives him the highest, healthiest, and most lasting pleasure.

It is, however, only by considering Scott in relation to his own age and the circumstances in which he formed himself, that we can reach a full estimate of him as a poet. This mode of viewing a man, it is true, has been sometimes pressed too far. Genius, in one sense the child of its century, in another is its father. Circumstances explain much: but they do not account for it. The individuality of the poet will always be the central point in him; there is an element in the soul insoluble to the most scientific analysis of a man's surroundings. But much light is undoubtedly gained by examining them. Scott received early, as we have seen, his direction in literature. Coming at the close of an age of criticism, he inaugurated an age of revival and of creation. It has been already noticed, that there was something of

reaction in this. Love of the ballads of Scotland, of mediæval legends, of German romantic poetry, had unconsciously impressed his style upon him before 1800. Already his passion was to describe wild and adventurous characters, to delineate the natural landscape, to seek the persons of his drama in feudal times or in the common life around him. The weighty satire of Dryden or Johnson, the cultivated world of Pope, the classical finish of Gray, although admired for their own merits, had no share in his heart of hearts. The friend of Dr. Blacklock, the child of the Edinburgh of Hume and Adam Smith, he was a "born romantic" without knowing it. Beyond any one he is the discoverer or creator of the "modern style." How much is implied in this! . . . It is true that by 1805 two other great leaders had already begun their career. Coleridge's fragment of "Christabel" was known to Scott, and influenced him in the "Lay." Wordsworth had published some of the most charming of his lyrics. But these men had as yet produced little effect, and the new faith nowhere found fewer believers than in Edinburgh; where, partly through the reluctance of the ordinary mind to accept originality, in part through the intense conservatism of literature, poets who now rank among the glories of England were treated as heretics with idle condemnation. It was some time before Scott could raise himself above this atmosphere, and say of the leading critic of the time, "Our very ideas of what is poetry differ so widely, that we rarely talk upon these subjects. There is something in Mr. Jeffrey's mode of reasoning that leads me greatly to doubt whether he really has any feeling of poetical genius." Few people are now likely to dispute this estimate; and no one did more to discredit the narrow

criticism prevalent sixty years since than Scott. If Lord Macaulay's opinion be correct, that Byron's poetry served to introduce and to popularize Wordsworth's, Scott's even more decidedly cleared the way for "Childe Harold" and the "Giaour." Indeed, much in Byron is modelled upon the older poet, to whom he always looked up with a respectful affection which makes one of the brightest spots in his own chequered story. "Of all men Scott is the most open, the most honorable, the most amiable."

With the proceeds of "Rokeby" Scott made himself master of a cottage then called Clarty Hole, but soon characteristically renamed Abbotsford, close to the Tweed, about midway between Melrose, Ashestiel, and Selkirk. Bare and essentially unimprovable is most of the land hereabout: Scott did something for it by planting,—the favorite outdoor employment of his middle life; yet to an English eye the trees have a poor, sad, nay (what from his work one did not expect), even a formal and unpicturesque, air; the wider views over the Border are rather desolate than impressive; there is neither the sweet "pastoral melancholy" of Yarrow, nor the verdure and richness of Melrose. But to the inner eye of the poet this region displayed scenes more lovely than Sorrento, more romantic than Monte Rosa. There was the Roman way to the ford by the house, the "Catrail" which had bounded

> Reged wide
> And fair Strath-Clyde;

the glen of Thomas the Rhymer, famous in fairy tradition; the haunted ruins of Boldside; the field of the battle of Melrose, the last great clan-fight of the Borders; Melrose visible eastward, the Eildon Hills cleft into their picturesque serration by Michael

Scott, south; Tweed flowing below the house and audible in it with its silver ripple. . . . Some ambition to found a line of "Scotts of Abbotsford," fated not to be fulfilled; even some fancy less worthy of a great mind, to be himself a lord of acres, may have influenced him when he laid out so much money and energy on the lands of Abbotsford, and on the endless antiquarian details of the house which he built there. Yet many phrases in his writings, and, far more, what we know of Scott's nature through life, afford convincing proofs that the possessions he really and veritably sought for were these memories of the past: these relics of that ancient Scotland for which he felt, "like a lover or a child," with a rare and noble passion. Abbotsford, with its Gothic architecture—tasteful and poetically imagined, if, to our more trained eyes, imperfect in many particulars—its armor and stained glass and carved oak, its library of previous mediæval lore, poetry and history, its museum of little things consecrated by great remembrances, to Scott was a place where actual life was beautified by the ideal of his imagination, a Waverley romance realized in stone, a castle of his waking dreams, and held, also, as it proved, like those he sung of, rather by some fanciful and fairy tenure than by matter-of-fact possession. The gray mass of Abbotsford, with its sombre plantations, is not more enriched and glorified in Turner's lovely drawing, than the lordship of these barren acres was to Scott by the predominating poet within him.

In 1814 Scott was one of a cheerful company who coasted round Scotland in a yacht engaged upon lighthouse business, touching at the Hebrides, Orkneys, Western Isles, and north of Ireland. A pleasant journal records the incidents of this trip, saddened at the

close by the death of a dear friend, the Duchess of Buccleuch. It is a curious point of likeness between Scott and Goethe that, both being poets eminently interested in seeing men, and cities, and wild nature, and both also personally independent, yet the journeys of both were remarkably limited. Goethe never saw London, Paris, or Vienna. Except a hasty trip in 1810, Scott made but this one visit to the North and West of Scotland, and hardly knew more of England than lay between Berwick and London. The world must have lost much by this; but it is possible that the poets were guided by a true instinct, and feared lest the amount and vividness of the impressions which would have poured in upon them might be overpowering to the free exercise of their genius.

With an exultation natural to him, Scott now witnessed the first fall of Napoleon. He also completed his valuable edition of Swift's works. But the year is most remarkable to his biographer through that event which marks the beginning of the third epoch in Scott's life,—the publication of "Waverley."

III.

During the period here closed, powerful rivals in poetry had risen to divide the popularity of Scott. Byron had carried the manner of his tales into more passionate scenes of life. Crabbe had enlarged that gallery of human character which, if wanting in beauty, in originality and number stands alone amongst the poems of the time. The allegiance of those lovers of the inmost spirit of poetry who give the law to the next generation had been secured by Wordsworth. The brilliant dawn of Shelley was breaking on a yet unconscious world. Our modern school had passed the circle within which Scott had once been the chief

magician. He felt this; and, never strictly a believer in his own powers, had already set himself to put into the prose form which suited it best some of the vast material which he had gathered; beginning with the last greatly romantic event in Scottish history. "Waverley," commenced in 1805 (whence the second title "Sixty Years Since"), taken up in 1810, was completed now, and published in July, 1814. The last two volumes were written within three weeks of that summer of excitement, a fact of which Mr. Lockhart tells a very striking anecdote (iv, 172, 3). From motives already touched on, Scott carefully concealed the authorship; and although long before his name was announced (1827) little doubt remained in the minds of intelligent men, this first novel wanted the impulse of his already acquired fame: yet the blow went home, the success was immediate, and the writer had once more "found himself" in literature.

A few more dates will mark, in a general way, the course of the writer's genius in this field. "Guy Mannering" appeared in 1815; "The Antiquary" and "Old Mortality" next year; "The Heart of Mid-Lothian," 1818; "Bride of Lammermoor" and "Ivanhoe," 1819; "Kenilworth" and "The Pirate," 1821; "St. Ronan's Well," 1823; the "Fair Maid of Perth," 1828. These may be considered the typical works of the series; though there is hardly one which does not display the wonderful versatility of their author. Take even the feeblest of the "Waverley Novels," when shall we see the like again, in this style of romance? Goethe was accustomed to speak of Scott as the "greatest writer of his time," as unique and unequalled. When asked to put his views on paper, he replied with the remark which he made also upon Shakespeare, Scott's art was so high, that it was

hard to attempt giving a formal opinion on it. But a few words may be added on the relation borne by the Novels to the author's character. Putting aside those written in depressed spirits and failing health, the inequality of merit in the remainder appears almost exactly proportioned, not to their date, but to the degree in which they are founded on Scottish life during the century preceding 1771. In this leading characteristic they are the absolute reproduction of the writer's own habitual thoughts and interests. Once more, we find in them a practical compromise between past and present. We have had no writer whose own country was more completely his inspiration. But he is inspired by the "ain countree" he had seen, or heard of from those who were old during his youth. As he recedes from Scotland and from "sixty years since," his strength progressively declines. What we see as the series advances, are not so much signs that he had exhausted himself, as symptoms that he had exhausted the great situations of the century before his own birth; and "St. Ronan's Well" remains the solitary proof that, had events encouraged Scott to throw himself frankly into contemporary life, he might (in the writer's judgment) have been first of the English novelists here, as he indisputably is in the romance of the past.

It has been observed that one of the curious contrasts which make up that complex creature, Walter Scott, is the strong attraction which drew him, as a Lowlander the born natural antagonist of the Gael, to the Highland people. Looking back on the Celtic clans as we happily may, as a thing of the far past, softened by distance, colored by the finest tints of poetry, and with that background of noble scenery which has afforded to many of us such pure and lofty

pleasure, we cannot conceive without a painful effort that within a few years of Scott's own birth the Highlander had been to the Lowlander much what the Hindoo—the Afghan or Mahratta at least—is at present to the Englishman. All that we admire in the Gael had been to the Scot proper the source of contempt and of repugnance. Such a feeling is one of the worst instincts of human nature; it is an unmistakable part of the brute animal within us; more than any other cause, the hatred of race to race has hampered the progress of man. There is also no feeling which is more persistent and obstinate. But it has been entirely conquered in case of the Saxon and the Gael. Now this vast and salutary change in national opinion is directly due to Scott. Something of the kind might possibly have come with time; but he, in fact, was the man whose lot was to accomplish it. This may be regarded, on the whole, as his greatest achievement. He united the sympathies of two hostile races by the sheer force of genius. He healed the bitterness of centuries. Scott did much in idealizing, as poetry should, the common life of his contemporaries. He equally did much in rendering the past history, and the history of other countries in which Scotchmen played a conspicuous part, real to us. But it is hardly a figure of speech to say, that he created the Celtic Highlands in the eyes of the whole civilized world.

If this be not first-rate power, it may be asked where we are to find it. The admirable spirit and picturesqueness of Scott's poems and novels carry us along with them so rapidly, whilst at the same time the weaknesses and inequalities of his work are so borne upon the surface, that we do not always feel how unique they are in literature. Scott is often inaccurate

in historical painting, and puts modern feeling into the past. He was not called upon, as we have noticed, to represent mental struggles, but the element of original thought is deficient in his creations. "Scott's," says an able critic, "is a healthy and genial world of reflection, but it wants the charm of delicate exactitude; we miss the consecrating power." (*National Review*, April, 1858.) He is altogether inferior to Miss Austen in describing the finer elements of the womanly nature; we rarely know how the heroine feels; the author paints love powerfully in its effects and its dominating influence; he does not lead us to "the inmost enchanted fountain" of the heart. In creating types of actual human life Scott is perhaps surpassed by Crabbe; he does not analyze character, or delineate it in its depths, but exhibits the man rather by speech and action; he is "extensive" rather than "intensive;" has more of Chaucer in him than of Goethe; yet, if we look at the variety and richness of his gallery, at his command over pathos and terror, the laughter and the tears, at the many large interests beside those of romance which he realizes to us, at the way in which he paints the whole life of men, not their humors or passions alone, at his unfailing wholesomeness and freshness, like the sea and air and great elementary forces of Nature, it may be pronounced a just estimate which,—without trying to measure the space which separates these stars,—places Scott second in our creative or imaginative literature to Shakespeare. "All is great in the Waverley Novels," said Goethe in 1831, "material, effect, characters, execution." Astronomers tell us that there are no fixed points in the heavens, and that earth and sun momentarily shift their bearings. An analogous displacement may be preparing for the loftiest glories of the

human intellect; Homer may become dim, and Shakespeare too distant. Perhaps the same fate is destined for Scott. But it would be idle to speculate on this, or try to predict the time when men will no longer be impressed by the vividness of "Waverley," or the pathos of "Lammermoor."

The leading idea of this sketch of Scott's character is, that, under the disguise of worldly sense and shrewdness, the poetical nature predominated in his life. In regard to his conduct and career, this point has perhaps been sufficiently illustrated. Looking at him now as an imaginative writer; from many causes, amongst which modesty and pride played an equal part, he has told us little of his own mind. Compared with Byron's (see the correspondence between them,—iii, 394), Scott't letters are superficial; until misfortune unveiled him to himself, there are no "Confessions" in his journal. Then we find, what discerning friends had long noticed, that the strong man had carried with him through life the sensitiveness of his childhood. One, to whose papers in *Fraser's Magazine* (1835–6) this sketch is indebted for some observations not found elsewhere, remarks that Scott was often subject to fits of abstraction, when he would be so completely absorbed in thick-coming fancies, that he became unconscious where he was, or what he was writing. Scott's stern repression and strong wish to do before the world only what the world does, render these points at once more hard to trace, and more significant. The emotion of such a character is deep in proportion to the resistance which it meets from the other elements. The fervor which melted Scott would have consumed a less powerful nature. When among scenes of wild Nature he was so rapt and excited that his friends felt it

the wisest and kindest thing "to leave him to himself" (iv, 181). This was in the height of his vigor and assumed stoicism. Later on, but some time before decline had seized him, he writes, "The beauty of the evening, the sighing of the summer breeze, bring the tears into my eyes not unpleasantly:" or again, "I spent the day wandering from place to place in the woods, idly stirred by the succession of a thousand vague thoughts and fears, the gay strangely mingled with those of dismal melancholy; tears which seemed ready to flow unbidden; smiles which approached to those of insanity." And then he adds, "I scribbled some verses, or rather, composed them in my memory." If the one eminent English critic who has expressed a formal judgment upon Scott as a writer, had not insisted chiefly upon the rapidity of his writings, treating them as superficial and transient in interest, it would have been unnecessary to dwell upon this point; it really is no more than that imagination is never displayed but by a man of imaginative mind; that poetry can be written only by a poet. But even the charge of over-haste appears to be pressed by Mr. Carlyle too far. Scott's idea of poetical style, it must be allowed, errs upon the side of spontaneous impulse; he would rather be unfinished than overfinished, preferred vigor to refinement, and aimed at the qualities he admired in Dryden, "perpetual animation and elasticity of thought;" did not make the most of his admirable materials; atoned for the random and the reckless by picturesqueness and movement. But there is nothing to be atoned for in perfect work; "incompleteness cannot enter into it;" the rival forces, as in Nature, balance each other. In a word, Scott's was the Gothic mind throughout, not the Greek; he wants

that indefinable air of distinction which even the lesser ancient authors have; no writer of such power has furnished fewer quotations; "he used the first sufficient words which came uppermost;" he does not bring his idea to a consummate expression, such as incorporates itself within the memory; thought and the phrase, matter and spirit, rarely seem to form one indivisible whole. It is in this quarter that he is perhaps most in danger from the hand of Time. To say that such was Scott's nature, and that he did best to follow it, whether in his genius or in his life, would be to assume that he was incapable of the peculiar attribute of genius, its capacity for improvement. Yet we must not conclude that his writing cost him little; it should be remembered that he hardly touched original work till he was of mature age, and had collected vast stores; he is like the musician who plays the most difficult piece at sight, as the reward and the result of years of practice. "What infinite diligence in the preparatory studies; what truth of detail in the execution," said Goethe. The speed with which Scott actually composed, in fact, consumed him; the fire of heaven destroyed the conductor. When we read that "Guy Mannering" was completed within six weeks, we may say, "These things were his paralysis." Nothing came to Scott "in his sleep." "I will avoid," he says, in one of the few letters where he speaks out, "any occupation so laborious and agitating, as poetry must be to be worth anything" (vi. 400).

The one of all Scott's writings which has the highest qualities of pathos and of unity,—the one which, on the whole, may be called his greatest and most poetical, affords the clearest example of what this essay aims most at proving, the dominant intensity of the

imaginative element in Scott. He dictated the "Bride of Lammermoor" while recovering from very severe illness (1819); but on regaining health, "when it was first put into his hands in a complete form, he did not recollect one single incident, character, or conversation it contained." Of all that we know about Scott, this incident is the most remarkable, especially if we recall the conspicuous sanity of his temperament; it casts the deepest light upon his nature; it shows how, when he wrote most powerfully, he was so inspired and penetrated by his subject that it flowed from him as if by a kind of rapture or possession; it makes one ready to say that, when least himself, he was most himself.

But many pages might be given to the criticism of Scott as a writer. It is time that we should resume his life, and try to complete the picture of his character. Scott had once or twice visited London in his earlier days, when he was known mainly as an antiquarian; in 1815 he was received there "with all the honors." "Waverley," everywhere recognized as his, put him at the head of our imaginative prose; as a poet, he was second in popularity to Byron alone. Byron's boyish attack upon him in the "English Bards" had been long forgotten; forgiveness it had never needed from the exquisite sweetness of Scott's temper, who had laughed, praised the writer's power, and added only, "spleen and gall are disastrous materials to work with for any length of time." These two great men now met, each with equal esteem for the gifts of the other; and Scott sought Byron's friendship with that alacrity of warm admiration for force of mind and character which marks him through life, and is one of the surest signs of genius. Soon after came the final "Hundred Days"

of Napoleon; Scott was among the first to visit the scenes of the campaign, and he found at Paris—then a city representative of everything except France—a renewal of his English popularity from the politicians and soldiers of the "allied armies." Some animated letters, and an Ode on Waterloo (not equal to the occasion), were the fruit of this journey. Now followed several years of a splendid, and, on the whole, a singularly well-enjoyed prosperity. "What series," says Mr. Carlyle, "followed out of *Waverley*, and how and with what result, is known to all men, was witnessed and watched with a kind of rapt astonishment by all. Walter Scott became Sir Walter Scott, Baronet, of Abbotsford (1820); on whom Fortune seemed to pour her whole cornucopia of wealth, honor, and worldly good; the favorite of princes and of peasants, and all intermediate men." That there was another and a more poetical side to the "wealth and worldly good" in Scott's mind has been already noticed; Abbotsford, with its relics and historical territory; its visitors from all lands, including many of the best of his contemporaries; its happy life among friends of equal age, and children fast growing up to be friends (two sons and two daughters), and healthy pleasures in forest and moor; and now at last, full enjoyment of the creative power, "the vision and the faculty divine," was a realized romance to Scott, the past living again in the present, common existence enriched and beautified by poetry. Mr. Lockhart here gives several pleasing and brilliant pictures of his father-in-law's life in town and country; a day at Abbotsford and a dinner at Ballantyne's are hardly inferior to scenes in the "Antiquary" or "Rob Roy" in vividness.

These descriptions would suffer by abridgment; in

place of them, let us try and form some image of the man. The first impression seems to have been that of a stalwart Liddesdale farmer, shrewd and quiet; the figure of good height, the forehead lofty, though not to the exaggerated measure of the bust; complexion ruddy; features massive, and inclining to heaviness. When he spoke, this rather inanimate air kindled into brilliant life in his eye and mouth, equally capable of expressing humor or pathos, and produced a greater effect by the force of contrast. The mutability of his features is noted throughout his life, and must have tried beyond their powers the artists who attempted his portrait. Whether through the early fever and its lameness, or some excess in field-sports and genial living, or the corrosion of a mind that never left him at leisure to "do nothing," or through all causes combined, when little over fifty he had already the look of a "gallant old gentleman;" and the sense of premature old age is written on every leaf of his later journals. "I think I shall not live to the usual verge of human existence; I shall never see the threescore and ten." Yet Scott preserved the spirit of his youth, and to the last was characteristically unwilling to allow himself beaten, even in climbing a slope without assistance. In these external details one reads the man; Scott, with his many contrasts and antitheses of disposition, was eminently made "all of a piece." This harmony of nature was not less shown in his conversation, which left the sense of quiet power, inexhaustible variety of anecdote, study of human character, and wealth of the well-stored memory, rather than of brilliancy. "He did not affect sayings; the points and sententious turns, which are easily caught up, were not natural to him. The great charm of his table-talk

was in the sweetness and *abandon* with which it flowed, always guided by good sense and taste; the warm and unstudied eloquence with which he expressed rather sentiments than opinions; and the liveliness and force with which he narrated and described." Abbotsford was a centre of life and society in its brightest, most enjoyable, and most cultivated form, unique in England, and which unhappily has never found a rival. No house, except it were Voltaire's at Ferney, is reputed to have been equally thronged. Scott's hospitality and kindliness were unlimited; he had the open nature which is the most charming of all charms; was wholly free from the folly of fastidiousness; *had* real dignity, and hence never "stood upon it;" talked to all he met, and lived as friend with friend among his servants and followers. "Sir Walter speaks to every man," one of them said, "as if they were blood-relations." Let us complete the picture in his own words; they give us the two contrasting sides of his character. "Few men have enjoyed society more, or been *bored*, as it is called, less, by the company of tiresome people. I have rarely, if ever, found any one, out of whom I could not extract amusement or edification. Still, however, from the earliest time I can remember, I preferred the pleasure of being alone to wishing for visitors." Need it be added that he was fond of the company of youth, and delighted as a mother in his children's presence? The letters to his eldest son's young wife are the most attractive and graceful in the series.

Our sketch, inevitably incomplete, must not be concluded without some note of Scott's taste and feeling towards literature. This, says Mr. Lockhart, "engrossed the greater part of his interest and reflection." Beside his original works, and the volumi-

nous editions of Swift and Dryden, Scott edited or superintended as many reprints as would have made the fame of an ordinary antiquarian. His own taste evidently led him by preference to our older poets. With Shakespeare his novels show a close familiarity. Scott's admiration for Dryden is expressed in the Life prefixed to his edition: that which he felt for Johnson's two "Satires" was little inferior. He deplores, in mature life, his ignorance of the Greek literature; of the Latin he had no intimate knowledge; nor does his early interest in Goethe, "my old master," appear to have been followed by the appreciation of those works compared with which "Goetz" was but crude and feeble. Dante, who represents rather the Roman than the Gothic mediævalism, he did not admire; finding him "obscure and difficult," and remaining even seemingly ignorant till the year of his death, that his own ancestor, Michael Scott, had found a place far down in Hell, where he is lodged by Dante in company of Amphiaraus, Teiresias, and other reputed sorcerers. In obedience not only to his own taste, but to a traditional fame now greatly faded, Scott was in the habit of reading through the "Orlando" of Ariosto yearly. The judgments preserved on modern English poetry are few and uncritical. In an undated conversation he spoke of himself and of Campbell as much inferior to Burns; and ranked Miss Joanna Baillie far above each. He even couples her with Shakespeare in one of the "Introductions" to Marmion. But Scott's impressions fluctuated. Thus he knew no man (1820) "more to be venerated" than Wordsworth for "loftiness of genius:" again, he "always reckoned Burns and Byron the most genuine poetical geniuses of my time, and half a century before me" (1826):—an opinion

founded on that predominance of the impulsive character in them which was the inspiration of his own poetry. On the other hand, Scott more than once expresses deep admiration for Miss Austen; the most unlike himself in style, if second only to him in genius, among all the novelists of the time. "This young lady had a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life, which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with."

After "Ivanhoe," published 1819, the sale of Scott's novels in some degree declined: a fact of which his partners in commerce never informed him. To this reticence, ultimately as unwise for themselves as for him, the negligences which grew upon Scott as a writer may be partly due. But to all eyes he increased in fame and wealth; was caressed and courted as kings have seldom been, but without any taint to the simplicity and beauty of his nature; and reached perhaps the height of his visible popularity with his fellow-creatures on his triumphal progress through Ireland in 1825. This was a year dark with panic and commercial ruin; Scott's firm, which had been always insecure and carelessly conducted, soon felt the shock. The poet, perhaps the least unbusiness-like member of the house, must have gradually withdrawn from active superintendence; and the clearest knowledge he ever obtained of his own affairs was when his bankruptcy, early in 1826, had been declared. The trying circumstances of the time stood for much in this failure, and Scott might have accepted it without discredit: but the shock roused all the determination in one of the most determined of men, and he resolved to pay the debt in full, and save by his own single-handed exertions what might be saved of his beloved Abbotsford for his family. "Scott's

heart clung to the place he had created. *There is scarce a tree on it that does not owe its being to me.*" His creditors consented; and the "Life of Napoleon," with the last volumes of the "Waverley" series, were among the results of this decision.

Hitherto something had been left to complete Scott's character. He had still to prove his complete fidelity to his vocation in literature. He had to give the far more arduous proof that he could bear evil fortune in exchange for unusual good. We cannot choose the date of our own trials. Scott's came upon him, not as with most men of genius, at their first experience of life, during the strength of youth, but after years of romantic success, and when the approaches of mortal disease had already enfeebled the powers of endurance. In the eye of the world—perhaps in the eye of the philosopher—it might have been the wiser part to let things take their course, submit, and decline a struggle of no doubtful issue to his own health and life. But, if these pages present a true picture, all this was simply impossible to Scott. It would have been to break with what lay deepest and broadest in him,—the nature of the poet. Accepting then his decision as that which alone he could adopt, the record of these later years, as told by Mr. Lockhart, and illustrated by Scott's journal, gives to his character the completeness of poetical unity. It is the fifth act in the drama of his life; it displays how the hero met the catastrophe, and overcame it, and rested at last from his labors. The words of an aged uncle, who did not live to see the evil day, were never more completely borne out than now: "God bless thee, Walter, my man! Thou hast risen to be great, but thou wast always good." It must have been with no little effort that he reappeared in the

capital of which he had for many years been beyond comparison the most distinguished inhabitant. "I went to the Court for the first time to-day," Jan. 24, 1826, "and, like the man with the large nose, thought everybody was thinking of me and my mishaps. Most were, undoubtedly, and all rather regrettingly; some obviously affected." Though deeply moved by the sympathy shown with him, he did not hold up his head until some pamphlets which he published upon a Scottish commercial question had succeeded. Then he writes, "People will not dare talk of me as an object of pity; no more *poor-manning*." But adversity now came in no measured proportions; the cup was filled, and ran over. Poverty was not the only or the worst evil of the year. One son was absent in the army, the second for his education; the care of a sickly and much-loved grandchild detained the eldest daughter; and Scott, leaving his wife ill beyond hope at Abbotsford, was compelled to set himself to solitary labor within a narrow lodging at Edinburgh. Soon a few pages in his journal, fearful in the pathetic struggle which they betray, tell us of the irremediable loss. Yet throughout the whole, Scott maintains that noble and submissive courage with which, years before the time of calamity, he had looked forward to the unseen future; whatever pain or misfortune might be in store, "I am already a sufficient debtor to the bounty of Providence to be resigned to it."

This resignation bore its fruits: and a kind of after-summer of mild and peaceful radiance, cheered by the fidelity of friends and the love of children, relieves the bodily infirmities and painful task-work of Scott's old age. At this time occurred an interchange

of interesting letters between him and Goethe. Scott gives a characteristic sketch of his own position: "My eldest son has a troop of Hussars; my youngest has just been made Bachelor of Arts at Oxford. God having been pleased to deprive me of their mother, my youngest daughter keeps my household in order, my eldest being married," to Mr. Lockhart, "and having a family of her own. Such are the domestic circumstances of the person you so kindly inquired after: for the rest, I have enough to live on in the way I like, notwithstanding some very heavy losses: and I have a stately antique chateau (modern antique), to which any friend of Baron von Goethe will be at all times most welcome, with an entrance-hall filled with armor, which might have become Jaxthausen," the castle in Goethe's *Goetz*, "itself, and a gigantic bloodhound to guard the entrance."

After a visit to London, where he was received by the best men of the time with affectionate respect, and a short excursion to Paris, he completed the "Life of Napoleon" in 1827. A crowd of other volumes followed this massive work, amongst which the "Letters on Demonology and Witchcraft" (1830), written under the pressure of imminent illness, are only sufficient to give an idea how that curious subject, for which he had made large preparations, would have been treated by Scott in his better days. There was much in him of Michael Scott, the magician; much also of Reginald Scott, the courageous advocate of reason and humanity in a superstitious age. Half shrewdness, half or more than half belief, the poise of his mind between the romantic and the critical, eminently fitted him to write impressively on witchcraft and ghostly legends. Perhaps no single point

is managed with more supreme skill in the "Novels." Let us add that, beside all these labors, his warm liberality of heart led him to give others freely that assistance with his pen which his purse could no longer supply. Already he had cleared off a vast load of debt, when Nature, on whom, between physical and mental exertion, he had pressed hard since youth, avenged herself by serious strokes of paralysis in 1830 and 1831. "Such a shaking hands with Death," he said, "is formidable." Scott resigned his legal office; but it was in vain that those about him tried to enforce the quiet of mind which was essential to *Euthanasia*, if not to life. No longer master of the creative imagination, the power which had long obeyed his bidding now compelled him as a slave; and do what his friends could to restrain him, more than one of the novels was produced within these months of decay. At length he was persuaded to try the southern climate. A final gleam of the Scott of younger years broke forth for one moment when Wordsworth came (Sept. 22, 1831) to bid him farewell. For the last time the two great poets who, while following the different paths which led both to masterworks, appreciated each other with the deep sympathy of genius, together traversed the vale of Yarrow. This day was commemorated by Wordsworth in one of the finest occasional poems in our language. A serene beauty characterizes the *Yarrow Revisited*. Perhaps Wordsworth looked on the scene with less saddened eyes than Scott; perhaps both these good and gifted men were raised above the inevitable and transient ills of life by the sight of nature, and the warmth of friendship; by the conscience which, for them more than for most, was

without reproof; by the peace which is beyond understanding.

No public and no private care
The freeborn mind enthralling,
We made a day of happy hours,
Our happy days recalling.
And if, as Yarrow through the woods
And down the meadow ranging,
Did meet us with unaltered face
Though we were changed and changing;
If *then* some natural shadows spread
Our inward prospect over,
The soul's deep valley was not slow
Its brightness to recover.

A royal vessel, with a sense of propriety rarely shown, was provided for Scott, who sailed in October for the Mediterranean. Malta, Naples, and Rome, mark the successive steps downward of his mind and body. Despite many manly and pathetic efforts to see and enjoy, these scenes, which would once have moved him so deeply, now passed with slighter remark; almost all that struck him were points connected with mediæval and Scottish history. The Knights of Malta, the Lombard relics at La Cava, the bandits of Calabria, the Orsini castle of Bracciano, the Cardinal of York's villa, the tomb of the last Stuarts in St. Peter's,—they read like a summary of the life which was well-nigh over; they resume many of his deepest interests. But they came too late.

—Nature's loveliest looks,
Art's noblest relics, history's rich bequests,
Failed to reanimate and but feebly cheered
The whole world's Darling.

The news of Goethe's death had been lately brought. Scott's impatience redoubled: "He at least died at home!" he exclaimed. "Let us to Abbots-

ford." Hurrying across Europe, but overtaken again by the disease as he went, he reached London as if only to die (June, 1832). Much public sympathy was roused by the intelligence; the Royal family made daily inquiries; "Do you know if this is the street where he is lying?" was the question of laborers collected in it;—but of all this Scott was unconscious; barely rousing himself for a moment from stupor when friends and children approached him. Then the one passion which had survived all others compelled its way, and he was borne back to draw his last breath at Abbotsford. Scott lay as if insensible in the carriage; "but as we descended the vale of Gala he began to gaze about him, and by degrees it was obvious that he was recognizing the features of that familiar landscape. Presently he murmured a name or two—*Gala Water, surely, Buckholm, Torwoodlee.* As we rounded the hill, and the outline of the Eildons burst on him, he became greatly excited; and when, turning himself on the couch, his eye caught at length his own towers, at the distance of a mile, he sprang up with a cry of delight."

For a few days, home, Abbotsford, Scotland, wrought on Scott so powerfully that they seemed capable of a cure which would have been hardly less than miraculous. "I have seen much," he kept saying, as they wheeled him through the rooms, "but nothing like my ain house—give me one turn more." At last he begged to be replaced in his study. "Now give me my pen, and leave me for a little to myself." But the pen dropped from his fingers. "He sank back, silent tears rolling down his cheeks; but composing himself by and by, motioned to me to wheel him out of doors again." They thought he then slept. "When he was awaking, Laidlaw," one of the many friends

who were like brothers to him, "said to me, *Sir Walter has had a little repose. No, Willie*, said he, *no repose for Sir Walter but in the grave.*"

After this it was a gradual descent to the rest which remained for him. Of all the many gifts that had formed the character of Sir Walter Scott, but one was now recognizeable through the gathering mist of death; that inexhaustible affectionateness and thought for others which had been the grace of his life. The intensity of love in him had throughout equalled the intensity of imagination; the most unselfconscious of our poets, he was perhaps also, so far as we can judge, the most unselfish. Scott, with his marked manliness of temperament, possessed in equal measure the best of the qualities which are often called feminine. "For the least chill on the affection of any one dear to him, he had the sensitiveness of a maiden." Warmth of heart and frankness of love were the very centre of his nature; and to the centre, life, struggling hard, had now retreated. At the final moment, when the sudden lightening of death came upon him, and he took an affecting farewell of Mr. Lockhart, it was proposed to fetch his daughters. "Shall I send for Sophia and Anne?" "No," said he, "do not disturb them. Poor souls! I know they were up all night. God bless you all." These were his last words. On the 21st of September, 1832, the end arrived with the gentleness of sleep, in the presence of all of his children. "It was a beautiful day, so warm that every window was wide open, and so perfectly still that the sound of all others most delicious to his ear, the gentle ripple of the Tweed over its pebbles, was distinctly audible as we knelt around the bed, and his eldest son kissed and closed his eyes."

Scott was laid by his wife within a family grave

among the ruins of Dryburgh Abbey, in the centre of the obscure Border province where he was most at home, and which his genius has made a region more familiar than the places that they have themselves seen, to children born in America and Australia. As, looking back to Homer and Shakespeare, one thinks of them surrounded by the beings to whom they have given a mysterious life, so Scott also lies among the real though shadowy world of his own creation. This, and the memory of his great-heartedness, is what he has left us. Travellers from all lands still throng to visit the scenery of his neighborhood, the hillsides he planted, the garden he laid out, the house filled with the relics sanctified in his eyes by the love of poetry and of Scotland. To save that house he fought and suffered. But it was never tenanted by his family; it stands there like the castle of a dream; as if ready for the master's return, but silent meanwhile and uncheered by life. His children have been long gathered to their rest; the lands which he bought at the price of genius have passed to another race; and one young girl, the child of his daughter's daughter, now preserves alone the blood of Walter Scott of Abbotsford.

F. T. Palgrave.

ESSAY ON SCOTT.

(FROM MASSON'S ENGLISH NOVELISTS.)

IN virtue both of his constitution and of his education, Scott, if he had betaken himself to prose fiction at first, instead of deferring his exercises in it to his mature age, would have had his connections, in the main, with the two last-named schools of British novel-writing at the close of the last and the beginning of the present century. He would have stood apart from Godwin and his class of political and speculative novelists, or would have even proclaimed himself their antagonist; and he would have taken rank both among the romance writers of the Gothic picturesque and among the painters of contemporary life and manners,—a chief among both, by reason of the general superiority of his genius, and producing among both those peculiar effects which would have resulted from his passion for the real in History, from his extensive antiquarian knowledge, and from his Scotticism. We have his own authority for this statement. He tells us that, as early as 1799 or 1800, before he had appeared conspicuously as a poet, he had meditated the composition of a prose tale of chivalry, after the example of Walpole's "Castle of Otranto," but on a Scottish subject, and with "plenty of Border characters and supernatural incident." He had actually written some pages of such a romance, to be entitled "Thomas the Rhymer," when circumstances changed his intention. He did not, however, abandon the idea of a Scottish

prose romance. In 1805 he wrote a portion of *Waverley;* and though that, too, was thrown aside, the impression made upon him by Miss Edgeworth's Irish tales was such as to convince him that, when he had leisure, he should be able to do something, in a similar style, for the representation of Scottish manners. The leisure came in 1814, when *Waverley* was completed and published. Between that date and his death, in 1832, he gave to the world, beside much else, the rest of the series of the Waverley novels.

If we omit one or two tales now included in the series, but not originally published in it, the Waverley Novels are twenty-nine in number. Of these twenty-nine novels, unless I err in my recollection of their contents, twelve belong to the eighteenth century, whether to the earlier or to the later part of it, namely: *Waverley*, *Guy Mannering*, *The Antiquary*, *Rob Roy*, *The Black Dwarf*, *The Heart of Mid-Lothian*, *The Bride of Lammermoor*, *St. Ronan's Well*, *Redgauntlet*, *The Highland Widow*, *The Two Drovers*, and *The Surgeon's Daughter;* six belong to the seventeenth century, namely: *Old Mortality*, *The Legend of Montrose*, *The Pirate*, *Woodstock*, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, and *Peveril of the Peak;* three to the sixteenth, namely: *The Monastery*, *The Abbot*, and *Kenilworth;* three to the fifteenth, namely: *Quentin Durward*, *The Fair Maid of Perth*, and *Anne of Geierstein;* one to the fourteenth, namely: *Castle Dangerous;* and the remaining four to other centuries as far back as the end of the eleventh, namely: *Ivanhoe*, *The Betrothed*, *The Talisman*, and *Count Robert of Paris.* Thus it appears that, though Scott did not hesitate to throw an occasional novel pretty far back into feudal and Gothic times, he preferred, on the whole, ground nearer to his own age, where he could blend the in-

terest of romantic adventure with that of homely and humorous representation of manners. Take another numerical classification of the novels on a different principle. Out of the whole twenty-nine, no fewer than nineteen, as I calculate, have their scenes laid wholly, or in great part, in Scotland, and are, almost throughout, novels of Scottish circumstance; five have their scenes laid in England, one of which, however, *The Fortunes of Nigel*, has much of Scottish circumstance in it; two have their scenes on the Continent, one of which, however, *Quentin Durward*, has a Scotchman for its hero; and three are Oriental in their ground and reference—of which one also, *The Talisman*, is dedicated to the adventures of a Scotchman. Thus, as regards place, it appears that Scott kept by preference near home; and that, but for some six or seven novels spared for purely English or for more remote themes, the name of the "Scottish Novels" might be applied with accuracy to the entire series. Combining the two classifications, and taking note of the order in which the novels were published, we can farther see, very distinctly, that Scott began with those which were Scottish in their subjects, and lay nearest his own age; and that only after he had pretty well exhausted that ground and that time, did he work far backwards chronologically, and away from Scotland geographically. *Ivanhoe*, which was his first novel not Scottish in subject, and also the first thrown farther back in time than the seventeenth century, was the tenth novel of the series in the order of composition.

You do not expect me, I am sure, to criticize the Waverley novels. We all know them, and we all enjoy them. There has been a deluge of British novels since they were written,—many of them most

rich and striking, and some of them presenting subtle characteristics which we do not seek in the Waverley novels, and which recommend them in an express manner to recent tastes; but when we are fatigued after a hard day's work, and want a book in the evening, do we not, all of us, find it answer our purpose to fall back on a Waverley novel? At such times, do we not run over the series mentally, or on the book-shelf, to see which of the novels it is that lies farthest off in our recollection; and, even should that chance to be the poorest of the set, do we not find it, after all, very pleasant reading? And, in this way, do we not systematically recover one after another of the series, just as it is slipping over the horizon of our memory, and retain all in permanent possession? And, when we think how many can use the books in this way,—that it is not the rich or the learned only that can thus wile away an hour of fatigue over these volumes, but to myriads of the poor and laborious, wherever our language is spoken, and, through translation, farther still, they serve the same refreshing function, as being so simple in matter and of such general interest, that the unlearned as well as the learned can understand them, and, at the same time, so pure and healthy in the main that no mind can take harm from them,—have we not, in this thought, some measure of the gratitude which, if only on the score of innocent amusement, the world owes to Scott? He was a modest, hearty man, with as little of the cant of authorship about him as any author that ever lived; he even detested that cant, talked as little of books as any man, and was a living rebuke to that miserable pedantry of our book-making days, which thinks and acts as if books were the only things of interest in the world, as if the earth were mere

standing-ground for writers and printers, the sea ink, and the sky parchment; and hence, when he spoke of his own novels, or of prose fiction in general, it was enough for him to think that the means of innocent amusement were thereby increased, and that men, in the midst of their business, might thereby have their minds a little lightened, and their hearts stirred by cheerful fancies. In attaining this, he attained more than he cared to mention as involved in it. It is the part of all poets and creative writers thus to make rich the thought of the world by additions to its stock of well-known fancies; and when we think of the quantity of Scott's creative writing, as well as of its popularity in kind,—of the number of romantic stories he gave to the world, and the plenitude of vivid incident in each; of the abundance in his novels of picturesque scenes and descriptions of nature, fit for the painter's art, and actually employing it; and, above all, of the immense multitude of characters, real and fantastic, heroic and humorous, which his novels have added to that ideal population of beings bequeathed to the world by the poetic genius of the past, and hovering round us and overhead as airy agents and companions of existence,—he evidently takes his place as, since Shakspeare, the man whose contribution of material to the hereditary British imagination has been the largest and the most various. Strike out Scott, and all that has been accumulated on him by way of interest on his capital, from the British mind of the last seventy years, and how much poorer we should be! His influence is more widely diffused through certain departments of European and American literature than that of any individual writer that has recently lived; and, many

generations hence, the tinge of that influence will still be visible.

It was no slight thing for the interests of British prose fiction, in relation to other established forms of our literature, that such a man as Scott, already laurelled as a metrical poet, and possessing, besides, a general reputation in the world of letters, should have devoted the last eighteen years of his life to activity in that particular field. Prose Fiction assumed, in consequence, a higher relative dignity; nay, Prose itself could be conscious of having advanced its standard several stages nearer to the very citadel of Poesy. Apart, however, from the extension given by the Waverley novels to the prose form of fiction in the general realm of imaginative writing, we note several other influences which they had on the direction and aims of imaginative writing, whether in prose or in verse. For an exposition of one of these influences—the influence exerted by Scott's peculiar method of viewing and describing natural scenery upon our modern art of landscape, whether in literature or in painting—I may refer you to Mr. Ruskin, to whose observations on such a subject it is not for me to add anything. You will find in the third volume of Mr. Ruskin's "Modern Painters" ample illustrations of Scott's fine sense of the picturesque in natural scenery, and especially of that by which Mr. Ruskin sets so much store, his fondness for color and sensitiveness to its effects; and you will there also find distinctions acutely expounded between Scott's mode of viewing nature and Wordsworth's mode, and also between Scott's mode and that of Tennyson and other more recent poets. It remains for me, in concluding this lecture, to call your attention again to those two characteristics of Scott

which we agreed to consider as the most prominently marked in his genius,—his veneration for the past, or the tendency of his genius to the historical; and, as the special form of that, his Scotticism. Out of these characteristics, as might be expected, spring two of the most notable influences which he has exerted on British prose fiction.

And, first, by the historical character of his novels, he communicated an historical tendency to our literature of fiction, which has not yet exhausted itself, and which has led to important results not ending in fiction only. Scott is the father of the Modern Historical Novel. There had been attempts at the thing before; but he first established this form of writing among us. In virtue, however, of his own affection not so much for the whole of the historical past as for the Gothic portion of that past, from the tenth or eleventh century downwards,—that is, for the ages of European chivalry and feudalism, and the times succeeding them,—he established the Historical Novel among us, so far as his own labors went, not in its entire capabilities, but only as applied to the range of the Gothic period, mediæval and modern. Scott is said to be the founder of the Novel of Chivalry. Such a designation, however, though accurate so far, is not sufficiently extensive. By far the greater number of his novels, as we have seen, are not novels of the age of Chivalry, nor even of that of Feudalism, but refer to times subsequent to the Reformation, and, most of them, to the latter half of the seventeenth or to the eighteenth century. The phrase "Historical Novel" is, therefore, the more suitable; or, to be more precise still, "the Historical Novel of the Gothic period in Europe." Those who have in their minds the proper signification of the words "Gothic period,"

as meaning the period of the leading activity of the so-called Gothic race in civilization, will understand what is here meant. There is no doubt that Scott did much to rouse an interest in this period of history, to settle our filial affections upon it as that whence we derive immediately all that is in us and about us; and also that he did much to interpret it to us, to make its habits, its costumes, its modes of life and action, more conceivable and intelligible. Even in such a matter as the revival among us of a taste for Gothic architecture, and for mediæval art generally, Scott's influence may be traced.

Here, however, comes in a question which was reserved. Was Scott's wholesome influence in the matter of Gothicism and mediævalism direct or indirect? Did he do the good he has done in this department by his own actual teachings, or only by setting a fashion which has led, or may lead, to more earnest inquiries and to more accurate teachings? Did Scott really understand the earlier feudal and chivalrous times which he represents in some of his novels? Were his notions of those times authentic and true, or only fictitious makeshifts? Mr. Ruskin, with all his admiration for Scott, pronounces decidedly against him in this question. He says that Scott, though he "had some confused love of Gothic architecture, because it was dark, picturesque, old, and like nature," knew nothing really about it, and was wrong in all he thought he knew. He says further, that Scott's "romance and antiquarianism, his knighthood and monkery," are all false, and were known by himself to be false. Baron Bunsen gives a similar opinion; and, indeed, I know that the opinion is general among men whose judgment in such a matter is entitled to respect. I have heard a

very good judge say that the German novel "Sidonia the Sorcerer," is a deeper and truer delineation of mediæval life than any of Scott's. For my own part, I cannot quite agree with this depreciation of Scott's mediævalism and feudalism, or, at least with the manner of it. I do not think that it was his antiquarian information that was in fault; at least, in reading his *Ivanhoe*, or his *Talisman*, or his *Quentin Durward*, or his *Fair Maid of Perth*,—in all of which he certainly flashes on the fancy in a manner that historians had not done before, and, with all their carping, have not found out the art of doing yet, a vivid condition of things intended to pass for mediævalism and feudalism,—I cannot find that our severest men of research have yet furnished us with that irrefragable and self evidencing scheme or theory of Mediævalism and Feudalism, by the test of which what Scott proffers as such is to fall so obviously into rubbish. Men, in hovering over a time, must fancy somewhat about it; and a very vivid "somewhat" will stand till accurate knowledge furnishes the imagination with the substitute. Scott's "somewhat" about Chivalry and Feudalism, besides that it will fade fast enough as we get a better, was not picked up at random, or without an amount of acquaintance with the materials that was in his time rather uncommon.

What in Scott's Gothicism and Mediævalism *is* false, arises, I believe, from a certain defect in his genius, which would have produced, and perhaps did produce, corresponding falsity in his imaginations out of the Gothic and mediæval regions altogether—to wit, his deficiency in the purely speculative faculty. The only Scottish thing that Scott had not in him was Scotch metaphysics. His mind was not of the

investigating, or philosophic, or speculative type; he was not, in the distinctive sense of the term, a thinker. Craniologists see this defect, they tell us, in the very shape of his head,—high above the ears, but not long from back to front. Whether the defect was in his head or in his thumbs, there it was, and it produced its consequences. It is in this most conspicuously that he falls short of Shakspeare. It is owing to this that, in so many of his more stately and ambitious characters,—as when he tries to paint a Cromwell or a Raleigh, or a Queen Elizabeth, or a Louis the Eleventh, or an enthusiastic mediæval monk—it seems as if he could but give a certain exterior account of the physiognomy, costume, gesture, but had no power to work from the inner mind outwards, so as to make the characters live. He cannot get at the mode of thinking of such personages; indeed, the notion of a "mode of thinking" as belonging to persons, or to ages, and to be seized in representing them, was not very familiar to him. If he did not reproduce the earnest and powerful thought of the mediæval period, its real feelings and beliefs, it was because his philosophy of the human mind and of human history was not so deep and subtle as to make feelings, beliefs, and modes of thought, the objects of his anxious imagination. But, if he failed in representing a great and peculiar mind of the historical past, he would equally have failed, and for the same reason, in representing a great and peculiar mind of the historical present. This is a feat indeed, to which I do not think we can boast that many of our writers of prose fiction have been, at any time, competent.

The wonder is that Scott, notwithstanding his defect, succeeded so marvellously where he did succeed.

Need I say where that is? Do we not feel that in his representations of homely and even of striking and heroic Scottish characters (with the exception already implied, and accounted for, of his Presbyterians and Covenanters), in a period of Scottish society near to his own time—in his representations of Scottish life and Scottish humors, nay of Scottish beliefs and modes of thinking in the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries (repeat the exception, at least partially), or even farther back still, where his shrewd observations of present human nature could co-operate with his antiquarian knowledge in filling out a social picture—he was simply as successful as it was possible to be? Are not his Davie Gellatlys, his Dandie Dinmonts, his Counsellor Pleydells, his Oldbucks, his Saunders Mucklebackets, his Edie Ochiltrees, his Cuddie Headriggs, his Nicol Jarvies, his Caleb Balderstones, his Dugald Dalgetty's, his Meg Doddses, and the like; nay, in a more tragic and elevated order, are not his Meg Merrilieses, his Rob Roys, his Redgauntlets, his Jeannie Deanses, as perfect creations as any in literature? These, and especially the homelier characters, are simply as well done as they could possibly be; and, in their conception and execution, I do not know that Scott *is* inferior to Shakspeare. Is it that in such cases his Scottish heart and his poetic instinct, acting on what he saw and knew, whirled him beyond his conscious power of speculation; or is it that, after all, there was a speculative faculty in Scott which he had not worked? From the shrewdness and sagacity of some of his critical prefaces to his novels, where he discusses principles of literature without seeming to call them such, I am sometimes tempted to believe the latter.

And so, after all, Scott is greatest in his Scotticism.

It is as a painter of Scottish nature and Scottish life, an interpreter of Scottish beliefs and Scottish feelings, a narrator of Scottish history, that he attains to the height of his genius. He has Scotticized European literature. He has interested the world in the little land. It had been heard of before: it had given the world some reason to be interested in it before; with, at no time, more than a million and a half of souls in it, it had spoken and acted with some emphasis in relation to the bigger nations around it. But, since Scott, the Thistle, till then a wayside weed, has had a great promotion in universal botany, and blooms, less prickly than of yore, but the identical Thistle still, in all the gardens of the world. All round the world the little land is famous: tourists flock to admire its scenery, while they shoot its game; and afar off, when the kilted regiments do British work, and the pibroch shrills them to the work they do, and men, marking what they do, ask whence they come, the answer is, "From the land of Scott."

> "O Caledonia, stern and wild,
> Meet nurse for a poetic child!"

sang Scott long ago. Caledonia nursed *him*, and he has repaid the nursing. And this man was born amongst *you!* This city gave him birth. All Scotland claims him, but *here* he had his peculiar home. Nor was he *ultimus Scotorum* nor the last of the men of Edinburgh. You have since had among you, born among you or naturalized among you from other parts of Scotland, other specimens of the national breed—Jeffrey, Chalmers, Wilson, Miller, Hamilton. Nature abhors duplicates; and though in all of these there was an element of characteristic Scotticism, and this was a source of their strength, all of them

were men by themselves, powerful by reason of their independent mould and structure and not one of them a repetition of Scott. This is as it should be. Scotticism is not one invariable thing, fixed and intransmutable. It does not consist merely in vaunting and proclaiming itself in working in Scottish facts, Scottish traditions, Scottish reminiscences—all of which has perhaps been done enough; it may be driven inwards; it may exist internally as a mode of thought; and there may be efficient Scotticism where not one word is said of the Thistle, and where the language and the activity are catholic and cosmopolitan. And, seeing that it is so, need we suppose that we have yet seen the last of the Scotchmen, the last of the men of Edinburgh? No! The drain may still be southwards; Scotland now subserves, politically at least, the higher unity of Great Britain, just as that unity in its turn subserves a larger unity still, not so obviously carved out in the body of the surrounding world. At the time when Scotland was united to her great neighbor, she was made partaker of an intellectual accumulation and an inheritance of institutions, far richer, measured by the mode of extension, than she had to offer to that neighbor in return; and since that period, while much of the effort of Scotland has been in continuation of her own separate development, much has necessarily and justly been ruled by the law of her fortunate partnership. And so for the future, it may be the internal Scotticism, working on British, or on still more general objects, and not the Scotticism that works only on Scottish objects of thought, that may be in demand in literature as well as in other walks. But while Scotland is true to herself, and while nature in her and her social conditions co-operate to impart to her

sons such an education as heretofore, there needs be no end to her race of characteristic men, nor even to her home-grown and home-supported literature. And, if so of Scotland at large, so relatively of the city that is her centre. While the traditions of Edinburgh are not forgotten, nor her monuments destroyed, nor her beauties eradicated; while the Castle still frowns in the midst, and the Lion of Arthur's Seat still keeps guard, and the wooded Corstorphines lie soft on one side, and the Pentlands loom larger behind, and the same circle of objects surrounds the ravished sight by day, and at night the lamp-lit darkness of the city's own heights and hollows is one glittering picturesque, and far off Inchkeith light flashes and disappears, piercing this noctural picturesque intermittingly, as with the gleam of a distant mystery; so long, if but human will and industry answer as they ought, may this city keep up her intellectual succession. There are great ones gone, and nature abhors duplicates; but

> "Other spirits there are, standing apart
> Upon the forehead of this *town* to come."

DRYBURGH ABBEY.

And Scott—that Ocean 'mid the stream of men!
That Alp, amidst all mental greatness reared!—

WAS morn—but not the ray which falls
the summer boughs among,
When beauty walks in gladness forth, with
all her light and song;
'Twas morn—but mist and cloud hung deep upon the
lonely vale,
And shadows, like the wings of death, were out upon
the gale.

For He whose spirit woke the dust of nations into
life—
That o'er the waste and barren earth spread flowers
and fruitage rife—
Whose genius, like the sun, illumed the mighty realms
of mind—
Had fled forever from the fame, love, friendship of
mankind!

To wear a wreath in glory wrought his spirit swept
afar,
Beyond the soaring wing of thought, the light of
moon or star;
To drink immortal waters, free from every taint of
earth—
To breathe before the shrine of life, the source whence
worlds had birth!

There was wailing on the early breeze, and darkness
in the sky,
When, with sable plume, and cloak, and pall, a funeral
train swept by;
Methought—St. Mary shield us well!—that other
forms moved there,
Than those of mortal brotherhood, the noble, young,
and fair!

Was it a dream?—how oft, in sleep, we ask, "Can
this be true?"
Whilst warm Imagination paints her marvels to our
view;—
Earth's glory seems a tarnished crown to that which
we behold,
When dreams enchant our sight with things whose
meanest garb is gold!

Was it a dream?—methought "the dauntless Harold"
passed me by—
The proud "Fitz-James," with martial step, and dark
intrepid eye;
That "Marmion's" haughty crest was there, a mourner
for his sake;
And she,—the bold, the beautiful!—sweet "Lady of
the Lake."

The "Minstrel" whose *last lay* was o'er, whose broken
harp lay low,
And with him glorious "Waverley," with glance and
step of woe;
And "Stuart's" voice rose there, as when, 'mid fate's
disastrous war,
He led the wild, ambitious, proud, and brave "Vich
Ian Vohr."

Next, marvelling at his sable suit, the "Dominie" stalked past,
With "Bertram," "Julia" by his side, whose tears were flowing fast;
"Guy Mannering," too, moved there, o'erpowered by that afflicting sight;
And "Merrilies," as when she wept on Ellangowan's height.

Solemn and grave, "Monkbarns" appeared, amidst that burial line;
And "Ochiltree" leant o'er his staff, and mourned for "Auld lang syne!"
Slow marched the gallant "McIntyre," whilst "Lovel" mused alone;
For *once*, "Miss Wardour's" image left that bosom's faithful throne.

With coronach, and arms reversed, forth came "Mac Gregor's" clan—
Red "Dougal's" cry pealed shrill and wild—"Rob Roy's" bold brow looked wan:
The fair "Diana" kissed her cross, and blessed its sainted ray;
And "Wae is me!" the "Baillie" sighed, "that I should see this day!"

Next rode, in melancholy guise, with sombre vest and scarf,
Sir Edward, Laird of Ellieslaw, the far-renowned "Black Dwarf;"
Upon his left, in bonnet blue, and white locks flowing free—
The pious sculptor of the grave—stood "Old Mortality!"

"Balfour of Burley," "Claverhouse," the "Lord of Evandale,"
And stately "Lady Margaret," whose woe might nought avail!
Fierce "Bothwell" on his charger black, as from the conflict won;
And pale "Habakkuk Mucklewrath," who cried "God's will be done!"

And like a rose, a young white rose, that blooms mid wildest scenes,
Passed she,—the modest, eloquent, and virtuous "Jeanie Deans;"
And "Dumbeidikes," that silent laird, with love too *deep* to *smile*,
And "Effie," with her noble friend, the good "Duke of Argyle."

With lofty brow, and bearing high, dark "Ravenswood" advanced,
Who on the false "Lord Keeper's" mien with eye indignant glanced:—
Whilst graceful as a lonely fawn, 'neath covert close and sure,
Approached the beauty of all hearts—the "Bride of Lammermoor!"

Then "Annot Lyle," the fairy queen of light and song, stepped near,
The "Knight of Ardenvhor," and *he*, the gifted Hieland Seer;
"Dalgetty," "Duncan," "Lord Monteith," and "Ranald," met my view;
The hapless "Children of the Mist," and bold "Mhichconnel Dhu!"

On swept "Bois-Guilbert"—"Front de Bœuf"—"De
Bracy's" plume of woe;
And "Cœur de Lion's" crest shone near the valiant
"Ivanhoe;"
While soft as glides a summer cloud "Rowena" closer
drew,
With beautiful "Rebecca," peerless daughter of the
Jew!

Still onward like the gathering night advanced that
funeral train—
Like billows when the tempest sweeps across the
shadowy main;
Where'er the eager gaze might reach, in noble ranks
were seen
Dark plume, and glittering mail and crest, and wo-
man's beauteous mien!

A sound thrilled through that length'ning host! me-
thought the vault was closed,
Where, in his glory and renown, fair Scotia's bard
reposed!
A sound thrilled through that length'ning host! and
forth my vision fled!
But, ah! that mournful dream proved true,—the im-
mortal Scott was dead!

The vision and the voice are o'er! their influence
waned away,
Like music o'er a summer lake at the golden close of
day:
The vision and the voice are o'er!—but when will be
forgot
The buried Genius of Romance — the imperishable
Scott?

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